

Welcome to the Workshop!

To meet other
teachers, paraeducators!

To network!

To participate!

To ask questions!

To enjoy yourself!

To relate what you learn
to yourself,
your job,
your school district!

To share what you learned
at this workshop
with others!

Paraprofessionals, teacher's aides, educational assistants, instructional assistants, and paraeducators – these different job titles (and there are more) reflect the variety of roles and responsibilities of this key member of the special education team. Today's paraeducator may be found in a pre-kindergarten class for children with special needs, out in the community serving as a job coach for a student with developmental disabilities, in a resource room for adolescents with learning disabilities, or in a 4th-grade classroom that contains some students with and without special needs. In short, paraeducators are present in most educational settings, under the supervision of the teacher, and they have skills and contributions that make them highly valued and sought after in education.



Today's students come to school with so many needs – from how to ask a question, to how to read, to how to get along with their peers. The classroom teacher, with an ever-lengthening student roster cannot do it all; so the paraeducator becomes the key assistant and support person. From grading papers to delivering lessons to one-on-one help for a student, the paraeducator assists the classroom teacher in small group and instructional lessons. Paraeducators are often called upon to deliver the lessons, grade homework and standardized tests, participate in classroom activities, and in general “be there” for the students and the teacher.

There are currently more than 1,000,000 full- and part-time paraeducators working in public and private schools. It is estimated that at least one third of all teachers receive assistance from a paraeducator.

Nature of Work

A paraeducator has almost innumerable duties. The different needs of each community or school district may also dictate the particular type of services provided by the paraeducator. For example, in California, where there are a large number of non-English-speaking students, the paraeducators are often bilingual when the teacher is not. There are more paraeducators in

elementary than secondary schools and more in cities and large towns than in rural and small town schools.

Paraeducators are frequently assigned to general education teachers who have inclusive classrooms, classrooms that contain all children including those with disabilities. When a general education teacher is faced with his or her usual number of general education students, plus students with special needs, many school districts assign paraeducators to assist the teacher in the delivery of instruction. Paraeducators generally work under the supervision of the teacher. “Para” means “along side of” and like paralegals and paramedics, paraeducators assist and support in a variety of ways.

Typical tasks for paraeducators include performing instructional activities planned by the teacher, giving the teacher feedback on students' progress, and assisting in clerical duties. In an ordinary day, a paraeducator might take attendance, tutor a child in a particular skill, monitor the lunchroom, or assist the teacher in administering a test. When the students have gone home, paraeducators work with the teacher on plans for the next day or week.

Personal Qualities

The duties of paraeducators are as diverse as the children they teach, so the qualities that make a good paraeducator are varied. Common characteristics include an enjoyment of children and a willingness to assist and support the teacher in creating a healthy learning environment. Paraeducators are dedicated to helping students develop and can adapt to a variety of teaching styles. They are flexible and resourceful and collaborate well with teachers and other paraeducators.

Often paraeducators become a link between the school and the community. Some inner-city schools specifically seek to hire neighbors and parent volunteers as paraeducators. Not only can this provide employment in typically high unemployment areas, but also these paraeducators are familiar with the students and the sometimes-harsh conditions typically encountered.

Job Outlook and Advancement

First introduced in large numbers during the teacher shortage following World War II, paraeducators are still in demand and opportunities for employment are growing. A recently released government report on employment outlook listed "teacher's aide" as one of 20 occupations that will make up half of all employment growth through the year 2005.

A few states have programs to recruit paraeducators and to assist them in achieving certification as a teacher. There is currently a shortage of teachers and one way that some states have addressed this is to encourage qualified paraeducators to become certified teachers.

However, there is a demand for paraeducators in their own right. The pay scale of a paraeducator is lower than that of a teacher. Some school systems ease the dual problems of large enrollments and reduced funding by hiring paraeducators. Paraeducators are also often reflective of the diverse ethnic, racial, and language minorities present in the community. As such, these paraeducators are in high demand and can form an important connection between the community and the school.

Resource Information

The National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education

1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191-1589
1-800-641-7824

E-mail: ncpse@cec.sped.org

URL: <http://www.cec.sped.org/ncpse.htm>

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services

Utah State University
Logan, Utah 84322-6526
1-435-797-7272

URL: www.nrcpara.org

American Occupational Therapy Association

1282 Piccard Drive, Suite 301
Rockville, MD 20850
1-301-652-2682

URL: <http://www.aota.org>

American Physical Therapy Association

1111 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
1-800-999-2782

URL: <http://www.apta.org>

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852
1-800-638-8255

URL: <http://www.asha.org>

THE PARAEDUCATOR AND TEACHER TEAM: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND ETHICAL ISSUES

This training program is designed to provide administrators, teachers, and paraeducators with knowledge of the current issues involved in the employment, supervision and training of paraeducators.

Chapter topics of this module include:

<u>Topic One</u>	Framing the Issues; Belief Statements; Guiding Principles; Definition; Current Issues; and, Future Directions
<u>Topic Two</u>	Federal Guidelines: IDEA; NCLB; and, CEC Knowledge and Skills for Beginning Paraeducators
<u>Topic Three</u>	Job Descriptions
<u>Topic Four</u>	Role Clarification: Principal, Supervising Teacher, and Paraeducator
<u>Topic Five</u>	Planning, Mentoring, Evaluation, and Feedback
<u>Topic Six</u>	Professional Ethics and Confidentiality
<u>Topic Seven</u>	Orientation and Staff Development
<u>Topic Eight</u>	Case Studies
<u>Topic Nine</u>	Appendix

Objectives:

1. Understanding of the value of paraeducators in educational programs.
2. Knowledge of certificated/licensed staff roles and responsibilities for program development, evaluation and for supervision of paraeducators, including legal requirements under IDEA and NCLB.
3. Understanding of paraeducator roles and responsibilities, including legal requirements and district policies and procedures.
4. Understanding of shared roles and responsibilities, including teaming and effective communication.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	1
ACTIVITY: Workshop Pre-Test	2
TOPIC ONE	3
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Beliefs	4
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Guiding Principles – Belief Statements	5
Guiding Principles for Paraeducator Employment, Roles, Preparation, and Supervision*	5
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Defining Paraeducator	6
Definitions of a Paraeducator	7
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Increase in Paraeducators	8
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Changing Roles and Issues	9
Issues Affecting the Employment, Training, Supervision, and Job Satisfaction of Paraeducators	10
TOPIC TWO	12
No Child Left Behind Act	13
Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004	13
QUALITY INDICATORS	15
CEC Standards for Paraeducators	17
Development of the Standards	17
CEC Knowledge and Skills for Beginning Special Education Paraeducators	18
TOPIC THREE	21
District-Wide Job Descriptions for Paraeducators	22
Program Job Descriptions	22
School Professional-Developed Personalized Job Descriptions	22
Summary	22
Paraeducator Job Descriptions	22
What Should be Included in a Job Description?	22
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Job Description Analysis	23
TOPIC FOUR	24
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Administrator Roles	25
The Principal's Role	25
THE ROLES OF SUPERVISING TEACHERS	26
SUPERVISION OF PARAEDUCATORS	26
Some Supervision Issues	26
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Supervisory Roles	27
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Functions Associated with Directing the Work of Paraeducators	28
Supervision	28
Functions Associated with Directing the Work of Paraeducators	29

Supervisory and Management Tasks Performed by Teachers: A Review	29
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Teacher/Paraeducator Role Perception Activity	30
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Who Performs the Duties?	31
Paraprofessional Roles	32
Inappropriate Roles for Paraeducators	32
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Role Description Exercise	34
Comparison of Teacher and Paraeducator Roles	34
TOPIC FIVE	35
Planning and Working Together	36
Basic Strategies for Clear Communication Between Teacher and Paraeducator	36
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Planning	37
PLANNING THE LESSON – Part One	37
PLANNING THE LESSON – Part Two	38
Sample Lesson or Instructional Plan (Example)	39
Giving Directions	40
Supervisor Checklist	40
A Sample Checklist: Paraeducators and Instruction	41
Providing Feedback to the Paraeducator -- Supervisor Checklist	42
Sample Paraeducator Feedback Form (checklist for supervisor)	43
Paraeducator Feedback and Evaluation Questions for the Supervisor	44
TOPIC SIX	45
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Ethical Issues	46
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Ethical, Professional and Confidentiality Issues	47
Professional and Ethical Responsibilities of Paraeducators	47
Confidentiality	48
Write ethical guidelines for paraeducators in your district.	48
CEC Special Education Professional Ethical Principles and Practice Standards	49
Special Education Professional Ethical Principles	49
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE STANDARDS	49
Practice Standards for Teaching & Assessment	49
Practice Standards for Professional Credentials and Employment	50
Practice Standards for Professional Development	51
Practice Standards with Professional Colleagues	51
Practice Standards with Paraeducators	52
Practice Standards with Parent(s) & Families	52
Practice Standards for Research	52
Practice Standards for Case Management	52
Practice Standards for Non-Educational Supports	53
Paraeducator Code of Ethics	54
What Supervisors Expect from Paraeducators	55
What Paraeducators Expect from Supervisors.	55
Effects of Instructional Assistant Proximity on Students with Disabilities	56
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: What are some of the ethical considerations when a paraeducator works one-to-one with a student?	57

Effects of Paraprofessional Proximity	58
Ethical Issues: Parents Right to Know: NCLB and IDEA	59
TOPIC SEVEN	60
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Orientation	62
Training and Preparation	63
Alignment	63
Sample Meeting Topics for the Beginning of the School Year	64
Key Topics That Need to be Discussed with the Paraeducator at the Beginning of the Year	64
Orienting the Paraeducator: Tips for Teachers	65
For the Paraeducator -- Questions to Ask the First Week on the Job	66
Paraeducator Orientation Assignment	67
District and School Structure	67
School rules and Regulations	67
Discipline	68
General Questions	68
Ethics and Confidentiality	68
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Paraeducator Orientation	69
A Core Curriculum for Paraeducators	70
Washington State Core Competencies for Paraeducators	71
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: District Handbook for Paraeducators	72
District Handbook	72
Building Handbook	72
Classroom or Program Handbook	72
Paraeducator Substitute Handbook	72
Title One Handbook	72
Preparation and Training of Paraeducators	73
TOPIC EIGHT	74
DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Case Studies	75
Case Study One	75
A Problem Solving Activity -- Case Study One	77
Case Study Two	78
A Problem Solving Activity -- Case Study Two	80
Case Study Three	81
Case Study Four	81
Case Study Five	81
ACTIVITY: Workshop Post Test	82
APPENDIX	83
Quotes	86
Bibliography	87
Paraeducator Resources And Websites	89
Organizations	91
THIS JOB IS A TEST	97

PREFACE

Recognizing the Paraeducator's Role in the Instructional Process

Dr. Kent Gerlach, Professor, Pacific Lutheran University

The importance of training paraeducators and their supervisors is now recognized at both the state and national levels.

During the past 25 years I have had the opportunity to deliver inservice training to over 85,000 paraeducators and teachers throughout the United States, Canada, and Australia. These staff development sessions primarily centered on the topics of roles, responsibilities, and ethical issues of teacher/paraeducator teams, and communication and teambuilding. As a result of this opportunity, I have grown in understanding the staff development needs of paraeducators and their supervisors, and the importance of role clarification and improved communication for all team members. As we begin to network on state and national levels we need to consider the following issues:

In our staff development workshops, the term "paraeducator" is used because it is a more accurate description of the role. It follows the job title of counterparts in law and medicine, paralegals and paramedics.

The term paraeducator can be defined as a person (a) whose position is either instructional in nature or who delivers direct services to students; and (b) who serves in a position for which a teacher or another professional has ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of individual educational programs or other services (Pickett, 1999). The term "teacher's aide" is no longer descriptive of the role of this important team member.

Job responsibilities of paraeducators have increased over the past few years. Paraeducators' responsibilities have moved from clerical duties to the direct instruction of students, either individual or small group.

In reality, they provide a cost-effective manner of extending the impact of certified professionals. Many paraeducators have their role and many teachers and administrators have had limited training in supervising paraeducators.

As the responsibilities change, more staff development and training opportunities for paraeducators and all classified staff will become available. Teachers also need to be trained to manage and supervise paraeducators. Appropriate training and supervision for paraeducators is now required in IDEA and the No Child Left Behind Act.

One of the concerns frequently raised by both paraeducators and teachers is the limited time available to communicate and to plan. Educational programs are now beginning to be organized to allow for regular and systematic communication. Time to plan together has proven to be extremely important for the success of the team and for success of the students.

In light of the important contributions that paraeducators make, and in view of national trends emphasizing the importance of differentiated staffing in the delivery of educational services, it will become more and more important that the management, training and career support of paraeducators be directed by state and professional standards that reflect appropriate concern for (a) the quality of service provided to students and (b) the substantive role and contribution of the paraeducator in the process of educating students.

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ACTIVITY: Workshop Pre-Test

1. Define paraeducator.
2. What are the benefits in utilizing paraeducators within education programs? For students? For teachers?
3. Explain why supervision of paraeducators is essential and required under federal guidelines.
4. What are the teacher's responsibilities to planning for the paraeducator?
5. What should be included in a paraeducator's job description?
6. What should be included in the orientation provided to a paraeducator?
7. Why is a team approach important?
8. Explain the importance of setting aside a regular conference time for the teacher and paraeducator. What are appropriate topics for the conference?
9. What are the Federal regulations regarding paraeducator training and supervision?
10. In preparing the paraeducator to assist in and supporting instruction, what steps should the teacher take?

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Beliefs

List all your beliefs (guiding principles) concerning the employment, preparation, training, and supervision of paraeducators. After you have written your beliefs, write the implications of these statements.

Example: Paraeducators should receive appropriate supervision to carry out their responsibilities.

Implications: Teachers must be trained to direct and manage the work of paraprofessionals.

Example:

Implications:

Example:

Implications:

Example:

Implications:

Example:

Implications:

Example:

Implications:

Example:

Implications:

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Guiding Principles – Belief Statements

Several states have developed “guiding principles, standards, or guidelines” for paraeducators. Do you feel this is important? If so, why?

Guiding Principles for Paraeducator Employment, Roles, Preparation, and Supervision*

Goals:

- Create and/or strengthen policies and systems that impact on paraeducators roles, supervision, and preparation.
- Build the capacity of SEAs, LEAs, other human service/education systems, and IHEs to recruit, retrain, and prepare a skilled committed paraeducator workforce.
- Assure that paraeducators are effectively supervised and appropriately integrated into program implementation and planning teams.
- Enhance the recognition of the value of skilled paraeducators as team members

Guiding Principle 1: Skilled paraeducators are employed to improve the quality of education and services in other provider systems and to help ensure supportive, inclusive, safe, and healthy learning environments for children, youth, and staff.

Guiding Principle 2: Administrators and teachers/providers create environments that recognize paraeducators as valued team members and effectively integrate them into teams.

Guiding Principle 3: Members of all program planning and implementation teams participate within clearly defined roles in changing, dynamic environments to provide learner-centered and individualized experiences and services for all children and youth and their families.

Guiding Principle 4: Paraeducators are respected and supported in their team roles by policymakers, administrators, teachers/providers, and families.

Guiding Principle 5: Standards for paraeducator roles and professional development assure that they are assigned to positions for which they are qualified and have the skills required to assist teachers/providers to provide quality learning experiences and related services for all children and youth and their families.

Guiding Principle 6: Paraeducators receive pre- and in-service professional development provided by the district/agency and opportunities for continuing education or career advancement offered by institutions of higher education.

Guiding Principle 7: Teachers/providers responsible for supervising the work of paraeducators have the skills necessary to plan for, direct, provide on-the-job training for, monitor, and evaluate the performance of paraeducators.

Guiding Principle 8: Paraeducators have an occupational/professional identity and contribute to learner-centered activities that help to achieve the mission of the school/agency.

*These guiding principles are based on research activities conducted by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals and paraeducator development efforts in Utah, Minnesota, Iowa, Washington, and Rhode Island.

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Defining Paraeducator

“Para” means “alongside of”

Define the term paraeducator?

What are the most important words that must be included in a definition?

List other titles used by school districts to describe the position.

Definitions of a Paraeducator

A paraeducator is a school employee who assists and supports teacher-directed instruction (Gerlach, K., 2001)

Paraeducators are school/agency employees who work under the supervision of teachers or other professional practitioners. The certified professional is responsible for the design, implementation, and assessment of learner progress, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of learning programs. (Pickett, 1989)

The **paraprofessional** is an employee who, following appropriate training performs tasks as prescribed and supervised by the licensed/certified professional/practitioner. Paraprofessionals perform specific duties as directed by the licensed/certified professional/practitioner. The licensed/certified professional/practitioner maintains responsibility for assessing the learner and family needs, and for planning, evaluating, and modifying programs. (IDEA Partnerships Paraprofessional Initiative Report to U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Special Programs [OSEP], December 2001.)

Paraeducators provide services, under supervision, in the following programmatic areas:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ... Educational programs, including behavior programs | ... Physical therapy |
| ... Occupational therapy | ... Speech and language therapy |
| ... Early intervention and pre-school programs | ... Recreation programs |
| ... Social work/case management | ... Parent training/child find programs |
| ... Vocational training programs and job coaching | ... Playground, lunchroom, library |
| ... Computer assistance | ... Health assistance |
| ... One-to-one instruction (Interpreters, etc.) | |

Can you think of others?

Other Terms Used by School Districts

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ... paraprofessional | ... inclusion assistant |
| ... parapro | ... one to one assistant |
| ... instructional aide | ... one to one aide |
| ... instructional assistant | ... support aide |
| ... educational aide (E.A.) | ... support assistant |
| ... educational assistant (E.A.) | ... facilitator |
| ... teachers aide (T.A.) | ... behavioral assistant |
| ... teachers assistant (T.A.) | ... classified |
| ... helping assistant | ... para |
| ... education technician | |
| ... teaching assistant | |

The Role of Paraeducators – NEA

The NEA believes paraeducators play an increasingly critical role in improving student achievement. The Association believes the paraeducators' role is to support and assist licensed educators in both instructional and non-instructional duties. The Association further believes paraeducators should meet minimum competency standards established within their respective states. The Association also believes affiliates, school districts, higher education institutions, and public agencies need to collaborate in guaranteeing a continuum of preservice and inservice training for paraeducators. Finally the Association believes compensation for paraeducators needs to be linked to professional development and experience.

July 1999
Orlando National Conference

Paraeducators: The Future

Increased status, recognition and respect
Increased staff development opportunities
Better role clarification (job description)

This will mean:

- ◆ More team involvement
- ◆ Differentiated staffing
- ◆ Recognition for training
- ◆ Competencies (knowledge and skills)
- ◆ Standards (state, national, professional)
- ◆ Legislation (state, national)

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Increase in Paraeducators

Paraeducators have long been employed in public schools. The number of paraeducators employed in schools is rapidly increasing. Why?

How many paraeducators do you think are employed in America's schools? In your state?

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Changing Roles and Issues

Discuss the changing roles of the paraeducator. How and why do you think the role continues to change?

Discuss the changing role of teachers. How and why do you think the role of teachers continues to change?

What do these changes mean for staff development?

What do these changes mean for preservice education (higher education)?

List some current issues that are presently affecting the role of paraeducators and those who supervise them. (In your school district)

Examine the issues you have identified. What changes need to be made to address these issues? Identify those that are administrative or district issues. Identify those that are state policy issues.

Issues Affecting the Employment, Training, Supervision, and Job Satisfaction of Paraeducators

Role Definition

Problem. There has, for some time, been a lack of clarity regarding proper roles and responsibilities of paraeducators and those who supervise them. Many state agencies have not developed and/or required local agencies to clearly define the role of the paraeducator and the role of the supervisor in the instructional process.

Discussion.

What needs to be done to address this issue?

Develop and Disseminate Strategies

Problem. Currently there have been a limited number of strategies developed from research or practice for the effective use and employment of paraeducators. Effective practices that do exist need to be validated, consolidated, and disseminated to the field.

Discussion.

What needs to be done to address this issue?

Legal and Ethical

Problem. Many state and local agencies do not have policy, laws, regulations, standards, or guidelines that prevent paraeducators from being used inappropriately and that in turn can cause students to fail to receive the appropriate education and/or health and safety needs they are entitled. Further, few states have a licensing or credentialing system that would provide standards for and require training of paraeducators.

Discussion.

What needs to be done to address this issue?

Job Descriptions

Problem. Local agencies and individual schools have failed to develop job descriptions that are clear and definitive concerning the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators.

Discussion.

What needs to be done to address this issue?

Opportunities of Training and Development of Paraeducators

Problem. Currently training for paraeducators, if available, is often not competency-based and is rarely part of a comprehensive system of career development. Further, paraeducators are seldom provided with opportunities for career advancement or staff development opportunities. As a result, incentives for professional development are minimal.

Discussion.

What needs to be done to address this issue?

Preparation of Professionals

Problem. Teachers and administrators are often not prepared for the responsibilities of supervising, directing, monitoring, training, and evaluating.

Discussion.

What needs to be done to address this issue?

Communication Time

Problem There is little time for the team to communicate and plan together. Some paraeducators report that they work the same hours as the students, which does not allow time to communicate with their supervisors.

Discussion

What needs to be done to address this issue?

Job Security, Salary, and Recognition

Problem Many paraeducators report little job security, low wages, and few benefits. Paraeducators report they are the last to receive recognition for their efforts.

Discussion

What needs to be done to address this issue?

Supervision and Evaluation

Problem Paraeducators report that supervision is often lacking, although required by law. Many report they do not receive a lesson plan from their supervisors. Many districts do not have a formal evaluation form. Paraeducators report that they appreciate feedback on their work.

Discussion

What needs to be done to address this issue?

District Policies and Guidelines

Problem Few district policies or guidelines exist regarding the role of the paraeducator and their supervision. Many paraeducators have reported that they would appreciate a handbook or written guidelines.

Discussion

What needs to be done to address this issue?

Hilton, A , Gerlach, K , (1997) Employment, Preparation and Management of Paraeducators: Challenges to Appropriate Service for Students With Disabilities. Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Council for Exceptional Children, pp 71-76

No Child Left Behind Act

Qualifications of Paraprofessionals

ESEA 2001 or the NCLB (No Child Left Behind Act) requires that each state receiving funds under Title I, Part A, develop a plan to ensure all new paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, and working in a program supported with Title I funds have met one of the following requirements:

- Completed at least two years of postsecondary study; OR
- Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; OR
- Met a rigorous "standard of quality" and can demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics by passing a formal state or local academic assessment. (The term "standard of quality" is not defined in the law, although the implication is that this standard is to be established by the state, rulemaking may further clarify this provision)

Current paraprofessional must meet one of the above requirements no later than the end of the school year 2006. In addition, all paraprofessionals working in Title I supported schools, regardless of hiring date, must have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

PART B - ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION OF ALL CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Section 612 State Eligibility

(a) IN GENERAL – A State is eligible for assistance under this part for a fiscal year if the State submits a plan that provides assurances to the Secretary that the State has in effect policies and procedures to ensure that the State meets each of the following conditions:

(14) PERSONNEL QUALIFICATIONS

(A) IN GENERAL – The State educational agency has established and maintains qualifications to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out this part are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including that those personnel have the content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities.

(B) RELATED SERVICES PERSONNEL AND PARAPROFESSIONALS – The qualifications under subparagraph (A) include qualifications for related services personnel and **paraprofessionals** that –

- (i) are consistent with any State-approved or State-recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services;
- (ii) ensure that related services personnel who deliver services in their discipline or profession meet the requirements of clause (i) and have not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and,
- (iii) Allow **paraprofessionals and assistants** who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with State law, regulation, or written policy, in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities.

(C) POLICY – In implementing this section, a State shall adopt a policy that includes a requirement that local educational agencies in the State take measurable steps to recruit, hire, train, and retain highly qualified personnel to provide special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities.

Section 613 Local Educational Agency Eligibility

(a) IN GENERAL – A local educational agency is eligible for assistance under this part for a fiscal year if such agency submits a plan that provides assurances to the State educational agency that the local educational agency meets each of the following conditions:

(3) PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT – The local educational agency shall ensure that all personnel necessary to carry out this part are appropriately and adequately prepared, subject to the requirements of section 612(a) (14) and section 2122 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

PART D – NATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Subpart 1 – State Personnel Development Grants

Section 651 Purpose; Definition of Personnel; Program Authority

(a) PURPOSE – The purpose of this subpart is to assist State educational agencies in reforming and improving their systems for personnel preparation and professional development in early intervention, educational, and transition services in order to improve results for children with disabilities

(b) **DEFINITION OF PERSONNEL** – In this subpart the term ‘personnel’ means special education teachers, regular education teachers, principals, administrators, related services personnel, paraprofessionals, and early intervention personnel serving infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, or children with disabilities, except where a particular category of personnel, such as related services personnel, is identified.

Section 654 Use of Funds

(a) **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES** – A State educational agency that receives a grant under this subpart shall use the grant funds to support activities in accordance with the State’s plan described in section 653, including 1 or more of the following:

(3) Providing professional development activities that –

(B) Improve the knowledge of special education and regular education teachers and principals and, in appropriate cases, paraprofessionals, concerning effective instructional practices, and that –

- (i) provide training in how to teach and address the needs of children with different learning styles and children who are limited English proficient;
- (ii) involve collaborative groups of teachers, administrators, and in appropriate cases, related services personnel;
- (iii) provide training in methods of --
 - (I) positive behavioral interventions and supports to improve student behavior in the classroom;
 - (II) scientifically based reading instruction, including early literacy instruction;
 - (III) early and appropriate interventions to identify and help children with disabilities;
 - (IV) effective instruction for children with low incidence disabilities;
 - (V) successful transitioning to postsecondary opportunities; and
 - (VI) using classroom-based techniques to assist children prior to referral for special education;
- (iv) provide training to enable personnel to work with and involve parents in their child’s education, including parents of low income and limited English proficient children with disabilities;
- (v) provide training for special education personnel and regular education personnel in planning, developing, and implementing effective and appropriate IEPs; and
- (vi) provide training to meet the needs for students with significant health, mobility, or behavioral needs prior to serving such students;

(C) train administrators, principals, and other relevant school personnel in conducting effective IEP meetings; and,

(D) train early intervention, preschool, and related services providers, and other relevant school personnel, in conducting effective individualized family service plan (IFSP) meetings.

(5) Carrying out programs and activities that are designed to improve the quality of personnel who serve children with disabilities, such as –

(A) innovative professional development programs (which may be provided through partnerships that include institutions of higher education), including programs that train teachers and principals to integrate technology into curricula and instruction to improve teaching, learning, and technology literacy, which professional development shall be consistent with the definition of professional development in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; and

(B) the development and use of proven, cost effective strategies for the implementation of professional development activities, such as through the use of technology and distance learning.

(6) Carrying out programs and activities that are designed to improve the quality of early intervention personnel, including paraprofessionals and primary referral sources, such as –

- (A) professional development programs to improve the delivery of early intervention services;
- (B) initiatives to promote the recruitment and retention of early intervention personnel; and
- (C) interagency activities to ensure that early intervention personnel are adequately prepared and trained.

(b) **OTHER ACTIVITIES** – A State educational agency that receives a grant under this subpart shall use the grant funds to support activities in accordance with the State’s plan described in section 653, including 1 or more of the following:

(2) Programs that establish, expand, or improve alternative routes for State certification of special education teachers for highly qualified individuals with a baccalaureate or master’s degree, including mid-career professionals from other occupations, paraprofessionals, and recent college or university graduates with records of academic distinction who demonstrate the potential to become highly effective special education teachers.

QUALITY INDICATORS

Quality Indicators for States and Local Districts who are interested in assessing their personnel development systems relative to the inclusion of paraprofessionals and assistants:

Definitions and Demographics

Does your State have an updated definition of paraprofessional and/or paraeducator? How many paraprofessionals are in the State? Identify by type, discipline, and location.

Roles and Responsibilities

How are paraprofessionals currently utilized in your State? What programs are they assigned to? What are their responsibilities? Who supervises them?

Are roles for paraprofessionals clearly defined as supervised providers of direct services to children, youth, and their families?

Are distinctions between professional and paraprofessional roles clearly identified?

Does the language demonstrate a respect for paraprofessional positions and, therefore the individuals who fill them (e.g., uses the term "paraprofessional" rather than the shortened term "para")?

Supervision

Who is responsible for setting standards for supervision for paraprofessionals and assistants? Who has primary responsibility for supervision in situations where there are multiple lines of supervision? Are these standards tied to (integrated into) the State's teacher/provider preparation or teacher/provider certification/licensure systems?

Is sufficient time and opportunity provided for orientation, and ongoing meetings and supervisory responsibilities?

Are teacher preparation programs revising their course content to include supervisory responsibility for paraprofessionals? How does this supervisory responsibility compare with other disciplines?

Training

Have knowledge and skills required by paraeducators and assistants to work in different position levels, programs, and across disciplines been identified and developed?

Are there systematic competency-based opportunities for personnel development and career advancement?

- For paraprofessionals
- For administrators who manage paraprofessionals
- For educators and other professionals who supervise paraprofessionals

Does the training provide paraprofessionals and their supervisors with an understanding of the roles of professionals as team leaders, diagnosticians, program planners and supervisors of paraprofessionals?

Does the content demonstrate respect for children and youth with disabilities and their families, as well as for those who come from diverse ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds?

Does the training material include information on the ethical, legal, and team-based roles of professionals and paraprofessionals in the delivery of education and related services?

Are licensed/certified professionals/practitioners involved in the training that have knowledge of and respect for professional and paraprofessional roles?

Is sufficient time and opportunity provided for orientation, initial training, and continued competency development?

How can different constituencies (e.g., professional associations, provider agencies, IHEs) contribute to the efforts to improve teacher/provider-paraprofessional teams?

Credentialing

Is there a statewide credentialing system or mechanism for assuring that paraeducators and assistants have the skills they require? What type of program is it? At what level is it administered? Who administers it (i.e., State, local district, professional association)?

Government and Stakeholder Policies and Practices

What is the impact of federal mandates and funding, State reimbursements policies, and regulatory procedures, or local collective bargaining agreements on the employment, training, and supervision of paraprofessionals and assistants?

What are the current roles for the various State agencies relative to establishing standards, credentialing systems, and supervisory responsibility for paraprofessionals and assistants in (and across) early childhood (including Head Start, child care, and early intervention/IDEA Part C), general and special education, ESL, and bilingual/multilingual education, and related services?

What are the roles of two and four year IHEs, professional organizations and unions in setting and implementing standards for paraprofessional utilization, personnel development, credentialing, and supervision?

What are the roles for State agencies, LEA, and other provider agencies for assuring that standards and other requirements are effectively implemented?

In your State, how are local districts and provider agencies addressing the following issues?

- Developing job descriptions for paraprofessional and assistant level positions?
- Determining placement of and delegation of responsibilities to paraeducators and assistants based on skill level, expectations of the job, and requirements of the position?
- Developing indicators for assessing the on-the-job performance of paraeducators and assistants?
- Providing standardized systematic opportunities for personnel development for paraeducators and assistants?
- Ensuring that teachers and providers are prepared for their roles as supervisors of paraeducators and assistants?

What administrative, political, and fiscal barriers exist in your State or local districts to the development of systems and standards to improve the performance of supervision and preparation of paraprofessionals?

What resources and supports are available to facilitate the development and implementation of standards and systems for paraeducators and assistants?

What can SEAs and other State agencies do to develop and strengthen partnerships among the different constituencies?

CEC Standards for Paraeducators

Council for Exceptional Children's Professional Standards and Practice Standing Committee approved recently the first set of national standards for the preparation of paraeducators of students with exceptionalities. The standards include the knowledge and skills paraeducators need to deliver instruction to students with exceptionalities, as well as the skills they need to work effectively with an instructional team. In addition, the committee approved standards for the preparation of special educators to supervise and support paraeducators. These standards have been incorporated into the Common Core Standards for All Special Educators and reflect the central role that paraeducators play on the instructional team.

As educators rely more frequently on paraeducators to help fulfill their professional responsibilities, standards to ensure these individuals are qualified to meet their role are crucial. In the past few years, paraeducators have been a growing part of instructional teams. In fact, the number of paraeducators working in public schools has doubled in just the past decade. Paraprofessionals often deliver vital services to students with exceptional needs and/or give important feedback to the special education teacher concerning the students' progress, as well as provide other support services to school staff. Additionally, IDEA 97 and NCLB now requires that paraeducators be appropriately trained and supervised to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities.

With the growth in the use of paraeducators, educators have realized their potential as strong members of the educational team. From personal management tasks to administering accommodated tests, paraeducators extend the eyes and hands of special education professionals. As an essential member of the instructional team, paraeducators have the knowledge and skills for the responsibilities they are given.

Like the standards for professional special educators, the paraeducator standards address multiple aspects of education and instruction and provide guidelines for the skills paraeducators should have mastered in each domain, including

- Foundations of special education.
- Characteristics of learners.
- Assessment and evaluation.
- Instruction content and practice.
- Planning and management.
- Student behavior and social interaction.
- Communication and collaboration.
- Professionalism and ethical practice.

The new standards for professional educators include skills in determining the appropriate roles and responsibilities of paraeducators in relation to instruction, intervention, and direct services, as well as supervising and evaluating paraeducators.

Development of the Standards

CEC's Knowledge and Skills Subcommittee worked closely with the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services (NRCBERS) to develop the standards. The standards were validated by paraeducators themselves along with special educators from CEC. The validation survey included samples drawn from paraeducator members of CEC, the National Education Association, and the American Federation of Teachers.

Meanwhile, CEC continues working closely with the NRCBERS task force to identify standards for all instructional paraeducators.

The new paraeducator standards are available in the fifth edition of *What Every Special Educator Must Know: The International Standards for the Preparation and Certification of Special Education Teachers, Second Edition*. To order, call 888/CEC-SPED.

CEC Knowledge and Skills for Beginning Special Education Paraeducators

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS STATEMENTS

PE: Paraeducator Common Core 1. Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations of Special Education
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Knowledge:

- K1 Purposes of programs for individuals with exceptionalities
- K2 Beliefs, traditions, and values across cultures and their effect on the relationships among children, families, and schooling
- K3 Rights and responsibilities of parents and children/youth as they relate to individual learning needs
- K4 The distinctions between roles and responsibilities of professionals, paraeducators, and support personnel

Skills:

- S1 Perform responsibilities under the supervision of a certified/licensed professional in a manner consistent with the requirements of law, rules, and regulations, and local district policies and procedures

PE: Paraeducator Common Core 2. Characteristics of Learners
--

Knowledge:

- K1 Impact of differential characteristics of individuals with exceptionalities on the individual's life and family in the home, school, and community
- K2 Indicators of abuse and neglect that put students at risk

Skills:

- S1 (None in addition to the required knowledge and skills for all beginning special education teachers.)

PE: Paraeducator Common Core 3. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation
--

Knowledge:

- K1 Rationale for assessment

Skills:

- S1 Demonstrate basic data collection techniques
- S2 With direction from a professional, make and document objective observations appropriate to the individual with exceptional learning needs

PE: Paraeducator Common Core 4. Instructional Content and Practice

Knowledge:

- K1 Demands of various learning environments on individuals with exceptional needs
- K2 Basic instructional and remedial methods, techniques, and materials
- K3 Basic technologies appropriate to individuals with exceptional learning needs

Skills:

- S1 Assist in maintaining a safe, healthy learning environment that includes following prescribed policy and procedures
- S2 Use basic strategies and techniques for facilitating the integration of individuals with exceptional learning needs in various settings
- S3 As directed by a certified/licensed professional, prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning
- S4 Use strategies that promote the learner's independence

PE: Paraeducator Common Core
5. Supporting Teaching and Learning Environment

Knowledge:

K1 (None in addition to the required knowledge and skills for all beginning special education teachers.)

Skills:

- S1 Assist in maintaining a safe, healthy learning environment that includes following prescribed policy and procedures.
- S2 Use developmentally and age-appropriate strategies, equipment, materials, and technologies, as directed, to accomplish instructional objectives
- S3 As directed by a certified/licensed professional, prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning.
- S4 Use strategies that promote the learner's independence.

PE: Paraeducator Common Core
6. Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills

Knowledge:

K1 Rules and procedural safeguards regarding the management of behaviors of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Skills:

- S1 Demonstrate effective strategies for the management of behavior.
- S2 Use appropriate strategies and techniques to increase the individual's self-esteem, self-awareness, self-control, self-reliance, and self-advocacy.
- S3 Assist in modifying the learning environment to manage behavior.
- S4 Collect and provide objective, accurate information to professionals, as appropriate.
- S5 Use appropriate strategies and techniques in a variety of settings to assist in the development of social skills.

PE: Paraeducator Common Core
7. Communication and Collaborative Partnerships

Knowledge:

- K1 Characteristics of effective communication with children, youth, families, and school and community personnel.
- K2 Common concerns of parents and individuals with exceptionalities.
- K3 Roles of individuals with exceptionalities, parents, teachers, paraeducators, and other school and community personnel in planning and individualized program.
- K4 Ethical practices for confidential communication about individuals with exceptionalities.

Skills:

- S1 Under the direction of a certified/licensed professional, use constructive strategies in working with individuals with exceptional learning needs, parents, and school and community personnel in various learning environments
- S2 Follow the instructions of the professional.
- S3 Foster respectful and beneficial relationships between families and other school and community personnel.
- S4 Participate as requested in conferences with families or primary caregivers as members of the educational team.
- S5 Use appropriate basic educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities
- S6 Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity in cultural heritages, lifestyles, and value systems among children, youth, and families.

S7 Function in a manner that demonstrates the

ability to use effective problem solving, engage in flexible thinking, employ appropriate conflict management techniques, and analyze one's own personal strengths and preferences.

PE: Paraeducator Common Core
8. Professionalism and Ethical Practices

Knowledge

- K1 personal cultural biases and differences that affect one's ability to work effectively with children, youth, families, and other team members.
- K2 The paraeducator as a role model for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Skills

- S1 Demonstrate commitment to assisting learners in achieving their highest potential
- S2 Function in a manner that demonstrates a positive regard for the distinctions among roles and responsibilities of paraeducators, professionals, and other support personnel.
- S3 Function in a manner that demonstrates the ability to separate personal issues from one's responsibilities as a paraeducator.
- S4 Demonstrate respect for the culture, religion, gender, and sexual orientation of individual students.
- S5 Promote and maintain a high level of competence and integrity
- S6 Exercise objective and prudent judgment.
- S7 Demonstrate proficiency in academic skills including oral and written communication
- S8 Engage in activities that promote paraeducator's knowledge and skill development
- S9 Engage in self-assessment activities.
- S10 Accept and use constructive feedback.
- S11 Practice within the context of the CEC Code of Ethics and other written standards and policies of the school or agency where they are employed.

"A profession is formed when members of an occupation agree that they have a knowledge base, that what they know relates directly to effective practice, that being prepared is essential to being a responsible practitioner, and that unprepared people will not be permitted to practice. Until members of the profession band together to articulate and enforce standards, the debate will continue."

Darling-Hammond, L., 1990, Teachers and Teaching: Signs of a Changing Profession. In W.R. Houston, M. Haberman, & Sikula, J. (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Teacher Education, (pp 267-290) New York: MacMillan Publishing Company

District-Wide Job Descriptions for Paraeducators

District-level job descriptions should provide the foundation for program and school professional-generated job descriptions. They contain instructional paraeducator roles and responsibilities; define supervisory responsibilities, and experiential/education requirements for different paraeducator positions.

Program Job Descriptions

Job descriptions for specific program areas identify tasks unique to the setting and student needs. Program-specific job descriptions should also address supervisory responsibility, roles, duties, and criteria for formal evaluations.

School Professional-Developed Personalized Job Descriptions

School professionals who supervise paraeducators are responsible for establishing a personalized job description that includes tasks the paraeducator will perform, where they will occur, individual student needs, materials required, and instructional strategies to be used. These job descriptions should be modified as changes occur in student goals and objectives.

Summary

Paraeducator Job Descriptions

The job description should clarify the roles of the paraeducator in the education program. The job description should specifically delineate the paraeducators duties that paraeducators are to perform and the duties the paraeducators are not to perform. Supervision procedures should also appear in the job description.

What Should be Included in a Job Description?

1. The job title should be specific to the job and emphasize the team role.
2. Details of what the paraeducator is expected to do should be delineated.
3. A description of the paraeducators relationship with the student served should be described.
4. Supervision guidelines must be addressed.
5. All necessary personnel (including paraeducators) should be consulted in the development of the job description.

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Job Description Analysis

Instructions: Analyze job descriptions from different districts and programs to determine if they contain the components listed below. Check those items that are included in the job description.

- _____ 1. Are the following subtitles included within the job description?
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Position title | <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation and supervision |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Position setting | <input type="checkbox"/> Orientation and training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Qualifications | <input type="checkbox"/> Time/hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rationale/purpose for the position | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Orientation/training requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> Salary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Duties and responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefits (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hours of employment | |
- _____ 2. Is the job title appropriate and reflective of current trends in paraeducator employment?
- _____ 3. Does the job description include enough detail about expectations for the position (e.g., what the paraeducator will be doing)?
- _____ 4. Does the job description show a true relationship to what paraeducators are currently doing?
- _____ 5. Are the paraeducators responsibilities to students detailed? Are limits to authority identified?
- _____ 6. How is supervision addressed?
- _____ 7. Does the job description provide direction for the development of paraeducator training programs? Are on-the-job training goals identified?
- _____ 8. Is information included on the methods of evaluation of the paraeducator?

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Administrator Roles

What are the roles of the school principal or program administrator regarding the employment and supervision of paraeducators?

The Principal's Role

The principal and other school administrators are critical to the success of instructional teams. The principal takes the leadership role in creating a school climate in which paraeducators have a professional identity and contribute to activities that help to enhance student achievement. Even though teachers are responsible for the day-to-day instructional supervision of paraeducators, principals are responsible for the administrative supervision that includes the hiring, preparation, evaluation, and dismissal of paraeducators. The following checklists will serve as a guide for administrators who want to improve the effectiveness of paraeducators and the teachers who direct their work.

The principal and/or other school administrators have the primary responsibility for:

- Recruiting, interviewing, and hiring paraeducators.
- Assigning paraeducators to specific programs, teachers, classrooms, or educational teams.
- Developing appropriate job descriptions.
- Developing appropriate policies for the employment, training, and supervision of paraeducators.
- Evaluating paraeducators and their supervising teachers.
- Promoting effective teamwork in the building and within teacher-paraeducator teams.
- Providing professional development opportunities for paraeducators and those who supervise them.

THE ROLES OF SUPERVISING TEACHERS

It is not possible to identify the roles of paraeducators or specify appropriate duties and tasks for them without first discussing the roles and responsibilities of teachers and other professional practitioners in classrooms and other education settings.

While teachers and paraeducators perform some tasks that overlap, especially in the area of technical skills (e.g., gathering data about student performance, maintaining records, providing direct instruction, implementing behavior management and disciplinary programs, and more), it is teachers or other professional staff members who are responsible for evaluating data, diagnosing needs of individual and groups of students and prescribing the programs to meet the modified needs. Teachers are also responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of instructional methods and assessing the impact of the program on student progress and performance.

It is teachers who are responsible for planning, scheduling and directing the work of paraeducators and other support personnel such as volunteers and peer tutors. In sum, teachers have become managers of both the education process and human resources who serve as facilitators of student programs and learning.

--Anna Lou Pickett, Director

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services, New York, NY

SUPERVISION OF PARAEDUCATORS

NCLB, 2002 -What does NCLB say?

- ✓ A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if the teacher plans the paraprofessional's instructional activities and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional works. The paraprofessional also would be required to work in close proximity of the teacher
- ✓ There is a difference between the person responsible for hiring and evaluating performance (an administrator), and the person directing day-to-day work with students (an educator or other licensed person).
- ✓ Teachers must learn strategies for supervising paraeducators -- beginning in their teacher preparation programs. And, administrators must promote effective instructional supervisory relationships and create infrastructures that reward teams.

Some Supervision Issues

- ✓ What does IDEA 2004 say?
- ✓ Some studies have found that paraeducators report being "responsible" for the instructional program of a student when that is the responsibility of the teacher (Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, & MacFarland, 1997; Marks, Schrader, & Leving, 1999; Wallace, Stahl, & MacMillan, 2000).
- ✓ Paraeducators reported a high level of responsibility in their jobs, such as: decisions regarding adaptations, behavioral support, and interacting with team members including parents (Downing, Ryndak, & Clark 2000).

IF YOU ARE NOT SURE WHERE YOU ARE
GOING
HOW DO YOU TELL SOMEONE ELSE HOW TO
GET THERE

-Bob Mager 1976

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Supervisory Roles

In order for a teacher to supervise a paraeducator, several skills are necessary. What are the most important skills necessary to direct and manage the work of the paraeducator?

What should a paraeducator expect from a supervising teacher?

“A successful team effort is not a mysterious or magical event that just ‘happens’ because fate brought the right group together.

Real Teamwork happens as the result of a deliberate and well thought out plan, executed by a skilled team leader who has a clear vision, specific goals, and a definite strategy to get people to work well together.”

Robert Zenger

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Functions Associated with Directing the Work of Paraeducators

Supervision

Instructional supervision means that teachers and other paraprofessionals engage in many activities that provide direction and guidance to the work of paraeducators. What would be the expectations of a teacher who manages or directs the work of a paraeducator? List some of the responsibilities under each topic that teachers need to provide in order to supervise appropriately.

A. Planning Lessons
a. for students

b. for paraeducators

B. Delegating

C. On-the-Job Training

D. Monitoring Performance and Giving Feedback

E. Managing the Classroom or Program Environment

Functions Associated with Directing the Work of Paraeducators

A. Planning

- *Set goals for the instructional team*
- *Describe activities and methods*
- *Set expectations for outcomes*
- *Create and coordinate schedules*

B. Delegating

- *Orientation to Program and Learning Environment. Introduce people, policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities*
- *Determine what to delegate*
- *Direct tasks and responsibilities of the paraeducator*
- *Monitor performance*

C. On-the-Job Training

- *Conduct ongoing assessment of skills*
- *Teach, coach, mentor new skills*
- *Give feedback on skill performance*

D. Monitoring Performance

- *Track performance of duties*
- *Provide information about job performance*
- *Assist with staff development goal setting*

E. Managing the Classroom or Program Environment

- *Maintain effective communications*
- *Create an atmosphere of respect and recognition*
- *Facilitate problem solving*
- *Establish team guidelines*

- Adapted from the work of Nancy French, Ph D , University of Colorado - Denver

Supervisory and Management Tasks Performed by Teachers: A Review

Tasks performed by teachers to effectively integrate paraeducators into the instructional team and supervise their work may include:

- Planning, scheduling and assigning specific duties for paraeducators based on their work experience, level of training and demonstrated competency to perform a task;
- Directing and monitoring the day-to-day work of the paraeducator;
- Delegating appropriate tasks to paraeducators;
- Using effective communication and problem-solving techniques to reduce interpersonal or other problems that may occur in the classroom;
- Providing feedback about the paraeducators on-the-job performance; and
- Planning and providing structured on-the-job coaching based on the identified training needs of the paraeducator

To perform these duties, teachers require knowledge of district policies with regard to employment, roles and responsibilities, placement, evaluation and training of paraeducators.

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Teacher/Paraeducator Role Perception Activity

Directions Discuss the following tasks. Whose role is this? Place an "X" under teacher or paraeducator. If both perform this role, place an "X" in both boxes. After completing this exercise, circle the numbers of those that are "teacher only."

Task	Teacher	Paraeducator
1 Planning daily and weekly schedules		
2 Recording and Charting Data		
3 Administering standardized tests		
4 Scoring standardized tests		
5 Grading tests, papers, and student work		
6 Analyzing and interpreting the results of various assessment activities		
7 Setting goals and objectives for the class and individual students		
8 Writing the lesson plan		
9 Carrying out lesson plans		
10 Introducing new skills/concepts		
11 Modifying/adapting instructional plans and curriculum		
12 Instructing individual or small groups of students		
13 Teaching lessons to entire class		
14 Developing behavior management programs		
15 Disciplining students		
16 Developing instructional materials		
17 Evaluating student performance and progress		
18 Recording attendance and maintaining other records		
19 Setting up and maintaining learning centers/adaptive equipment		
20 Inventorying and ordering supplies		
21 Participating in individualized program planning meetings, parent conferences, and other school-based meetings		
22 Meeting and conferring with parents and families		
23 Consulting with therapists and other professional staff about a student's program and behaviors		
24 Maintaining a clean, safe learning environment		
25 Participation in IEP meetings		

NOTE: Based on activities contained in Handbook for Special Education Professionals, By A.L. Pickett and J. Formanek, 1982, New York, NY, and in Gerlach, K., 1992, Strengthening the Partnership: Issues, Roles and Responsibilities, Olympic ESD, and in Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings: A Team Approach, 2nd Edition, Pickett and Gerlach, 2003, Pro*ed, Austin, TX

REMINDER: The teacher has the ultimate responsibility for all instructional duties.

Note: There is NO answer key for this activity. Experience, training, etc. will affect your perception of whether it is a teacher only or shared role.

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Who Performs the Duties?

After completing the Role Perception activity on the previous page, list the duties (tasks) that should only be performed by the teacher or licensed and certificated staff. In other words, these tasks should be done only by the supervising teacher and are not appropriate for the paraeducator. Consider the ethical issues involved in instruction and supervision.

The following should never be assigned to a paraeducator. These would be considered inappropriate or unethical.

**IT'S NOT WHAT WE *DON'T* KNOW THAT
BOTHERS US SO MUCH.**

IT'S WHAT WE *DO* KNOW.

- Kent Gerlach

Paraprofessional Roles

The following is cited in NCLB as appropriate roles for paraprofessionals –

- Providing one-on-one tutoring for eligible students;
- Assisting with classroom management (such as organizing instructional and other materials);
- Providing assistance in a computer laboratory;
- Conducting parental involvement activities;
- Providing support in a library or media center;
- Acting as a translator; and
- Providing, under the direct supervision of a teacher, instructional services.

Some studies have found that paraeducators report being “responsible” for the instructional program of a student when that is the responsibility of the teacher (Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, & MacFarland, 1997; Marks, Schneider, & Leving, 1999; Wallace, Stahl, & MacMillan, 2000).

Paraeducators reported a high level of responsibility in their jobs, such as: decisions regarding adaptations, behavioral support, and interacting with team members including parents (Downing, Ryndak, & Clark, 2000).

Inappropriate Roles for Paraeducators

Although paraeducators have a more expansive and flexible role than ever before, some activities are considered inappropriate for them. There is considerable agreement that the following roles are not appropriate for a paraeducator. Some states and professional groups determined that paraeducators should not perform the following activities:

1. Assign final grades, fills in report cards
2. Make retention and promotion decisions
3. Administer, score and interpret an assessment instrument that requires subjective judgment (example: essay tests, diagnostic assessments)
4. Assume full responsibility of class for indefinite period of time
5. Make major decisions as to the subject matter to be taught
6. Has the primary responsibility for writing IEP's
7. Teaches academic subject matter to an entire class, without teacher present
8. Substitute for certificated teacher, unless paraeducator is recognized as an official substitute by the state
9. Plan individual daily lessons unless specially trained or program is pre-planned
10. Consult with other therapists or professionals about a student without supervisor's approval
11. Report to parents concerning a child's progress without supervisor's approval
12. Supervise student teachers
13. Attends IEP meeting in place of the teacher
14. Works without supervision
15. Makes programmable decisions without supervisor approval

Discussion:

The paraeducator knows and practices good professional ethics by

- a. Keeping information that pertains to school, school personnel, students, and parents or guardians confidential; directing communication that concerns the student's program to the child's classroom or IEP manager.
- b. Going directly to his or her supervising teacher should concerns arise
- c. Teaming with all school and itinerant staff

The paraeducator performs the following daily tasks to the best of his or her ability.

- a. Follows programs as written by the teacher
- b. Reinforces appropriate student behavior as modeled by the teacher and records accurate data when necessary
- c. Assists teacher in carrying out toileting and feeding programs
- d. Assists school specialists in P E , music, and art classes
- e. Assists the occupational, physical, and speech therapists or other itinerant staff as needed.
- f. Supervises all students in a positive manner.
- g. Responds to emergency situations calmly and appropriately.

The paraeducator and teacher establish a collaborative relationship, with the teacher holding responsibility for the student's program. The paraeducator

- a. Show a positive attitude toward self-improvement.
- b. Contribute to meetings with the teacher by sharing ideas and observations of students.
- c. Ask clarifying questions when necessary.
- d. Model the teaching and behavior management techniques demonstrated by the teacher
- e. Take initiative to carry out responsibilities of supervision.

The paraeducator follows the listed school philosophies, guidelines, and procedures.

- a. Notifies the supervising teacher if an absence is scheduled in advance.
- b. Prepares a substitute folder.
- c. Arranges breaks and lunch with teacher
- d. Arrives promptly and follows the daily schedule.
- e. Manages time efficiently during school hours.
- f. Dresses appropriately.
- g. Attends the scheduled paraeducator meetings.

The paraeducator demonstrates the understanding of student's rights.

- a. Respects the right of the student to a least restrictive environment.
- b. Provides an environment that protects the student's human dignity
- c. Displays a positive attitude when working with students
- d. Encourages student independence.
- e. Models age-appropriate behavior.

The paraeducator shares responsibilities for housekeeping and clerical duties

- a. Prepares the classroom before students arrive.
- b. Prepares or gathers materials students may need during the day
- c. Cleans classrooms as needed throughout the day.
- d. Follows schedules for filling and collecting spray bottles, arranging communication systems, etc.
- e. Prepares materials as directed by the teacher.
- f. Contributes to team efforts to keep work areas neat

Goal 1: To provide support to the student during academic, social, vocational, and leisure activities.

Goal 2: To enable students to become independent in their daily routines.

Goal 3: To provide support to the classroom teachers of our students

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Role Description Exercise

Comparison of Teacher and Paraeducator Roles

Read the role description of the supervising teacher, and then write the job description for the paraeducator. Use team words in writing the role of the paraeducator.

	Role performed by the supervising teacher	Role performed by the paraeducator
Classroom Organization	Plans weekly schedule Plans lessons/activities for entire class, individual children and paraeducator Plans room arrangement and learning centers	
Assessment	Assesses individual children Administers tests to entire class	
Setting Objectives	Determines appropriate objectives for class and for individual children	
Teaching	Teaches lessons for the entire class, small groups, and individual children	
Behavior Management	Plans behavior management strategies for entire class and for individual children	
Working with Parents	Meets with parents Initiates conferences with parents concerning child's progress	
Lesson Planning	Plans lessons for students Plans for the paraeducator	
Building Classroom Partnership	Arranges schedule for conferences, shares goals & philosophy with paraeducator, organizes job duties for paraeducator	

Adapted from Gerlach, Kent, Ed D. and Pickett, A I., (1992) Strengthening the Partnership: Issues, Roles and Responsibilities

Are the team words you used reflected in your district's paraeducator job descriptions?

Planning and Working Together

Basic Strategies for Clear Communication Between Teacher and Paraeducator

There are a number of elements that must be present in any situation to insure clear channels of communication. Some are commonplace and generally well known. Others are things we take for granted and, if the members of the team are not careful and do not pay attention; positive communication can be inhibited. For example:

- ... The attitude and feelings of both the teacher and paraeducator need to be known, respected, and understood. Teachers and paraeducators need to deal openly with their attitudes and feelings toward their roles and duties, their attitudes toward the students they work with, their attitudes toward instructional styles and management and their attitudes toward the value of the other person's contributions. When feelings are not shared and openly communicated the nature of the relationship will not grow and the team will not be effective.
- ... An understanding of the similarities and differences between the people involved in the team must be recognized and understood ranging from different points of view about educational strategies to different values, different cultural and religious heritage, different levels of education and experience and other factors that affect the working relationship.
- ... The teacher and paraeducator should actively seek to develop and share a common vocabulary and system of non-verbal cues.
- ... The teacher must make sure that directions and expectations are clearly understood and that the paraeducator is able to perform the assigned task prior to implementing the activity in the classroom.
- ... The paraeducator must be willing to ask for clarification or assistance if the assignment is not understood.
- ... The teacher should determine what special interests, strengths, and training the paraeducator has that will complement and enhance his/her own skills and improve the delivery of instructional programs to students.
- ... The team must actively work to create a climate of cooperation, trust, respect, and loyalty by meeting regularly to discuss procedures and techniques that will establish and maintain open channels of communication.

Adapted from Pickett, A L. (1986), A Training Program to Prepare Teachers to Supervise and Work More Effectively with Paraprofessional Personnel, New York: Center for Advanced Study in Education, City University of New York

PLANNING THE LESSON – Part One

- © Gerlach, K , 2010, Pacific Training Associates, Seattle, Washington

PLANNING THE LESSON – Part Two

1. Design a sample lesson plan format to be used for paraeducators to follow when working with an individual or group of students.

Student(s) _____ _____ _____ Paraeducator _____	Class _____ Date _____ Lesson Length (time) _____ Supervisor _____
--	---

Objective/Goals:

Description of Activity:

Materials:

Evaluation:

After Lesson:
 Note to Supervisor regarding lesson outcomes, etc.

 Teacher/Supervisor Signature

 Paraeducator Signature

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Giving Directions

When the teacher explains the job/assignment to the paraeducator, the following may need to be addressed:

- What is to be done
- Why it needs to be done
- Who will do the job
- Where it will be done
- How it will be done
- How the progress of the students will be monitored
- How the duties of the paraeducator will be observed

The roles of both the supervisor and paraeducator need to be discussed and understood.

Supervisor Checklist

1. Am I making myself clear? Do I ask for specific actions, or do I phrase requests in ambiguous terms, such as, "I'd appreciate it if sometime you would..." or, "it might be a good idea to..."
2. Do I provide a written lesson plan and schedule?
3. Do I set a deadline (or better still, get a mutually agreed upon (deadline) whenever I delegate to another person.
4. Do I confirm important issues in writing?

A Sample Checklist: Paraeducators and Instruction

Task Completed:

- _____ Have I met with my supervisor?
- _____ Have I reviewed the lesson plan?
- _____ Are the directions clear?
- _____ Do I feel adequately prepared for the instruction? Are the teacher's objectives clear?
- _____ Do I know how to begin the lesson?
- _____ Do I know what to do when the student responds appropriately?
- _____ Do I know how to handle inappropriate responses?
- _____ Am I prepared for off-task student behavior?
- _____ Do I have the materials ready?
- _____ Do I feel prepared to use the materials?
- _____ Do I have the teaching area arranged efficiently?
- _____ Is the teaching area comfortable for the student and me?
- _____ Do I know how to conclude the lesson?

After the Lesson:

- _____ Have I recorded behavioral observations about the student?
- _____ Have I completed the record of the student's performance or a summary?
- _____ Am I ready to evaluate the session with my supervisor?
- _____ How will I communicate the results of the lesson with my supervisor?

Adapted from Gerlach, K., Ed.D. and Pickett, A L., (1992), Strengthening the Partnership: Issues, Roles, and Responsibilities, Bremerton, WA, Olympic ESD #114

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Providing Feedback to the Paraeducator -- Supervisor Checklist

Instructions: This form is to be completed by the supervisor in order to provide feedback after observing the paraeducator conducting an instructional activity.

Date: _____

Activity: _____

Skills	Well Developed	Needs Improvement	Comment
1. Organizes for the session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Establishes rapport with student(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Give clear instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Uses appropriate questions and cues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Uses materials effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Keeps lesson focused on objective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Keeps student on task	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Give appropriate feedback to student	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Uses reinforcement effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Records student responses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Follows teacher lesson plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Stays on task and uses allotted time effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: ALL tasks assigned are under the supervision of a teacher.

Sample Paraeducator Feedback Form (checklist for supervisor)

Paraeducator Name: _____

School Year: _____

	COMMENTS
Is the Paraeducator teaching the objective?	
Does the objective relate to the student's (IEP) goals/objectives?	
Does the paraeducator show understanding and sensitivity to the student needs?	
Has the Paraeducator assessed the level of difficulty of the lesson and accurately adjusted accordingly?	
Has the student made academic progress since the last observation?	
Does the Paraeducator understand what lesson or task will sequentially lead to reinforcing the IEP's specially designed instruction?	
Lesson Objective Addressed	
Additional Comments:	

Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Paraeducator Signature: _____

Date: _____

Adapted from a similar form used in University Place School District, Washington State
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Paraeducator Feedback and Evaluation Questions for the Supervisor

1. Do I give the paraeducator honest and useful feedback that will help him/her to improve?
2. Do I encourage the paraeducator to share with me his/her observations of student's needs?
3. Do I respect the confidentiality of our exchange of information?
4. Do I help and encourage the paraeducator to participate in staff development opportunities to improve skills or for personal growth?
5. In addition to providing regular informal evaluation do I set aside time throughout the year for giving the paraeducator formal feedback/or evaluation?
6. Do I give the paraeducator opportunity to evaluate our team relationship and our work with students?
7. When evaluating the paraeducator, do I begin by letting him/her know what I think he/she does well; do I give him/her suggestions for improvement?
8. Do I tell the paraeducator how I appreciate his/her help and compliment him/her on specific things he/she is contributing to the program?
9. Do I inform the paraeducator in advance of scheduled changes that alter activities in which he/she is involved?
10. Do I meet with the paraeducator at a designated time each week?

What are some ways a paraeducator could give feedback to a supervisor?

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Ethical Issues

1. Define ethics.
2. Define professionalism Define a "profession."
3. From an ethical and legal perspective discuss why teacher supervision is essential for working with paraeducators.
4. From an ethical perspective discuss why paraeducator training is essential for working with students.
5. What do the school professionals and paraeducators need to know about professionalism and ethics?
6. What are some important ethical considerations when planning to integrate a paraeducator into a team where he/she will be supervised by a number of teachers?
7. All professionals have a code of ethics. If the job of a paraeducator is to be considered a new career choice, how do you feel about a nationally accepted code of ethics for paraeducators?
8. What are the ethical issues involved in scheduling, conferencing, delegation, lesson planning, large group instruction, and training of the paraeducator?
9. What are some of the professional and ethical considerations that should be discussed with paraeducators when they are employed?
10. What are some possible issues connected with the supervision of paraeducators that have professional and ethical implications? Present any you know about and discuss how they might have been resolved or prevented.

Adapted from: Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings: A Team Approach, Second Edition. Pickett and Gerlach, 2003, Pro*ed, Austin, Texas

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Ethical, Professional and Confidentiality Issues

You have been assigned to a committee that is to write policy and ethical guidelines for paraeducators and their supervisors. Brainstorm the ethical and professional issues you feel the committee should address. What guidelines should your school district write into district policy?

Professional and Ethical Responsibilities of Paraeducators

Paraeducators must:

- maintain confidentiality
- respect the legal and human rights of children and youths and their families
- follow school-district policies for protecting the health, safety, and well-being of students
- demonstrate an understanding of distinctions in roles of various educational personnel
- follow the directions of teachers and other supervisors
- follow the chain of command for various administrative procedures
- demonstrate dependability, integrity, respect for individual differences, and other standards of ethical conduct
- participate in staff development activities to improve performance

--National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals

Can you think of other professional and ethical responsibilities?

**It's better to know
some of the *questions*
than all of the *answers***

- James Thurber

Confidentiality

According to IDEA, school employees must follow guidelines to preserve the privacy rights of students and parents.

Confidential information refers to all information about a student including the following:

- personal and family information
- social, behavioral, and psychological actions and data
- academic performance and progress
- program goals and objectives

Paraeducators must comply with strict guidelines as to how and with whom information is shared. Consider the following:

- information should be shared only with staff working directly with the student
- parents requests for information should be referred to the supervising teacher
- paraprofessionals should never discuss confidential information in the teacher's lounge
- confidential information should never be shared in any setting other than the school and never in community social situations

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Paraeducator Ethical Guidelines

Write ethical guidelines for paraeducators in your district.

Consider the following:

- Responsibilities
- Relationships with students
- Relationships with parents and families
- Relationship with the supervising teacher
- Relationship with the school
- Relationship with the community

**EXPERIENCE IS A HARD TEACHER,
SHE GIVES THE TEST FIRST, THE
LESSONS AFTERWARDS**

CEC Special Education Professional Ethical Principles and Practice Standards

Special Education Professional Ethical Principles

Professional Special Educators are guided by the CEC professional ethical principles and practice standards in ways that respect the diverse characteristics and needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families. They are committed upholding and advancing the following principles.

- A. Protecting and supporting the physical and psychological safety of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- B. Neither engaging in nor tolerating any practice that harms individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- C. Engaging only in professional practices that benefit individuals with exceptional learning needs and their families.
- D. Using evidence to fundamentally inform practice, and exercising objective professional judgment in all aspects of professional practice.
- E. Developing the highest possible learning outcomes and quality of life potential of individuals with exceptional learning needs in ways that respect their dignity, culture, language, and background.
- F. Maintaining a high level of professional competence and integrity in their practice,
- G. Practicing collegially with others who are providing services to individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- H. Developing relationships with parents and families based on mutual respect, and actively involving parents and individuals with exceptional learning needs in educational planning.
- I. Practicing within the professional ethics, standards and policies of CEC; upholding laws, regulations, and policies that influence professional practice, and advocating improvements in laws, regulations, and policies whenever needed.
- J. Advocating for conditions and resources that will improve the learning outcomes of individuals with exceptional learning needs and the retention of special education professionals
- K. Maintaining challenging expectations for individuals with exceptional learning needs including individuals from different cultures and language backgrounds.
- L. Engaging in the improvement of the profession through active participation in national professional organizations.
- M. Participating in the growth and dissemination of professional knowledge and skills appropriate to their respective roles.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE STANDARDS

Practice Standards for Teaching & Assessment

Special Education Professionals:

1. Systematically alter instructional variables to maximize the learning outcomes of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
2. Identify and use evidence-based practices that are appropriate to their professional preparation and are most effective in meeting the individual needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

3. Use periodic assessments to accurately measure the learning progress of individuals with exceptional learning needs, and alter instruction variables in response to assessment results.
4. Create safe, effective, and culturally sensitive learning environments which contribute to fulfillment of needs, stimulation of learning, and realization of positive self-concepts.
5. Participate in the selection and use of effective and culturally respectful instructional materials, equipment, supplies, and other resources appropriate to their professional roles.
6. Use culturally and linguistically sensitive assessment procedures that validly measure what is intended to be measured, and do not discriminate against individuals with exceptional or culturally diverse learning needs.
7. Only use behavior change practices that are evidence-based, appropriate to their preparation, and which respect the culture, dignity, and basic human rights of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
8. Support the use of positive behavior supports and conform to local policies relating to the application of disciplinary methods and behavior change procedures, except when the policies require their participation in corporal punishment.
9. Do not engage in the corporal punishment of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
10. Refrain from using aversive techniques unless the target of the behavior change is vital, repeated trials of more positive and less restrictive methods have failed, and only after appropriate consultation with parents and appropriate agency officials.
11. Report instances of unprofessional or unethical practice to the appropriate supervisor.
12. Recommend special education services necessary for an individual with an exceptional learning need to receive an appropriated education.

Practice Standards for Professional Credentials and Employment

Special Education Professionals:

1. Represent themselves in an accurate, ethical, and legal manner with regard to their own knowledge and expertise when seeking employment.
2. Practice within their professional knowledge and skills and seek appropriate external support and consultation whenever needed.
3. Ensure that persons who practice or represent themselves as special education teachers, administrators, and providers of related services are qualified by professional credential.
4. Provide notice consistent with local education agency policies and contracts when intending to leave employment.
5. Adhere to the contracts and terms of appointment, or provide the appropriate supervisor notice of professionally untenable conditions and intent to terminate such employment, if necessary.
6. Advocate for employment opportunities and benefits (salary, working conditions, facilities, and other resources) that improve the learning outcomes of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
7. Seek qualified assistance in instances where personal problems interfere with job performance.
8. Ensure that public statements made by professionals as individuals are not construed to represent official policy statements of an agency.
9. Objectively document and report inadequacies in resources to their supervisors and/or administrators and suggest appropriate corrective action(s).
10. Respond objectively and non-discriminatively when evaluating applicants for employment.

11. Resolve professional problems within the workplace using established procedures, including grievance procedures.
12. Seek clear written communication of their duties and responsibilities, including those which are prescribed as conditions of employment.
13. Expect that responsibilities will be communicated to and respected by colleagues, and work to ensure this understanding and respect.
14. Promote educational quality and actively participate in the planning, policy development, management, and evaluation of special education programs and the general education program.
15. Expect adequate supervision of and support for special education professionals and programs provided by qualified special education professionals.
16. Expect clear lines of responsibility and accountability in the administration and supervision of special education professionals.
17. Advocate for sufficient personnel resources so that unavailability of substitute teachers or support personnel, including paraeducators, does not result in the denial of special education services.
18. Advocate for appropriate and supportive teaching and learning conditions.

Practice Standards for Professional Development

Special Education Professionals:

1. Maintain a personalized professional development plan designed to advance their knowledge and skills, including cultural competence, systematically in order to maintain a high level of competence.
2. Maintain current knowledge of procedures, policies, and laws relevant to practice.
3. Engage in the objective and systematic evaluation of themselves, colleagues, services, and programs for the purpose of continuous improvement of professional performance.
4. Advocate for adequate resources for effective school-wide professional development as well as individual professional development plans.
5. Participate in systematic supervised field experiences for candidates in preparation programs.
6. Participate as mentors to other special educators, as appropriate.

Practice Standards with Professional Colleagues

Special education professionals:

1. Recognize and respect the skill and expertise of professional colleagues from other disciplines as well as from colleagues in their own disciplines.
2. Strive to develop positive and respectful attitudes among professional colleagues and the public toward persons with exceptional learning needs.
3. Collaborate with colleagues from other agencies to improve services and outcomes for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
4. Collaborate with both general and special education professional colleagues as well as other personnel serving persons with exceptional learning needs to improve outcomes for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
5. Intervene following local policy when a colleague's behavior is illegal, unethical, or detrimental to individuals with exceptional learning needs.
6. Do not engage in conflicts of interest.

Practice Standards with Paraeducators

Special Education Professionals:

1. Assure that special education paraeducators have appropriate training for the tasks they are assigned.
2. Assign only tasks for which paraeducators have been appropriately prepared.
3. Provide ongoing information to paraeducators regarding their performance on assigned tasks.
4. Provide timely, supportive, and collegial communications to paraeducators regarding tasks and expectations.
5. Intervene in accordance with local procedures when a paraeducator's behavior is illegal, unethical, or detrimental to individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Practice Standards with Parent(s) & Families

Special education professionals:

1. Use culturally sensitive communication with parents and families which is respectful and accurately understood.
2. Actively seek and use the knowledge of parents and individuals with exceptional learning needs when planning, conducting, and evaluating special education services.
3. Maintain communications among parents and professionals with appropriate respect for privacy, confidentiality, and cultural diversity.
4. Promote opportunities for parent education using accurate, culturally sensitive information and professional methods.
5. Inform parents of relevant educational rights and safeguards.
6. Practice in ways that demonstrate respect for the cultural diversity within the school and community.
7. Respect professional relationships with students and parents, neither seeking nor taking any personal advantage.
8. Do not engage in inappropriate relationships.

Practice Standards for Research

Special Education Professionals:

1. Use research in appropriate, valid, and reliable ways that do not knowingly mislead others.
2. Actively support and participate in research intended to improve the learning outcomes of persons with exceptional learning needs.
3. Protect the rights and welfare of subjects participating in research.
4. Interpret and publish research results with accuracy.
5. Monitor unintended consequences of research projects involving individuals with exceptional learning needs, and discontinue activities which cause demonstrable harm.
6. Advocate for sufficient resources to support long term research agendas to improve the practice of special education and the learning outcomes of individuals with exceptional learning needs.
7. Show the applicability of research findings to practical teaching situations.

Practice Standards for Case Management

Special education professionals:

1. Maintain accurate student records and assure that appropriate confidentiality standards are in place and enforced.
2. Follow appropriate procedural safeguards and assist the school in providing due process.

3. Base grading, promotion, graduation, and/or transition decisions on the individualized goals and objectives for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
4. Provide accurate student and program data to administrators, colleagues, and parents, based on efficient and objective record keeping practices.
5. Engage in appropriate planning for the transition sequences of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Practice Standards for Non-Educational Supports

Special Education Professionals:

1. Perform assigned specific non-educational support tasks, such as administering medication, only in accordance with local policies, and when written instructions are on file, appropriate preparation has been conducted, legal/policy information is provided, and the professional liability for assuming the task is disclosed.
2. Advocate that special education professionals should not be expected to accept non-educational support tasks routinely.

Paraeducator Code of Ethics

1. Practice the standards of professional and ethical conduct approved by the school/district agency.
2. Recognize and respect the roles of teachers as supervisors and team leaders.
3. Recognize and respect the differences in the roles of teachers, other professional practitioners, and paraeducators.
4. Recognize the teacher's responsibilities for planning learner programs, modifying curriculum and instruction, assessing learner progress, and developing behavior management programs.
5. Perform tasks that are within an identified scope of responsibility for paraeducators in different position levels.
6. Share information with parents about their child's performance as directed by the supervising teacher.
7. Refer concerns expressed by learners or others to the supervising teacher or other professional practitioner.
8. Share appropriate information about learner's performance, behavior, progress, and/or educational program only with the supervising teacher in the appropriate setting.
9. Discuss confidential issues and school problems only with the supervising teacher or designated personnel.
10. Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all learner's, families, and staff members.
11. Refrain from engaging in discriminatory practices based on a learner's disability, race, sex, cultural background or religion.
12. Follow the guidelines established by the district agency to protect the health, safety, and well being of all learners and staff.
13. Represent the school district or agency in a positive manner.
14. Follow the chain of command established by the district to address policy questions, system issues, and personnel practices.
15. When problems cannot be resolved, utilize the agency's grievance procedure.
16. Participate with administrators and other stakeholders in creating and implementing comprehensive systems of professional development for paraeducators.
17. Participate in continuing staff development.
18. Know school policies and procedures.

Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings: A Team Approach, 2nd Edition, Pickett and Gerlach, 2003, Pro*ed, Austin, TX.

What Supervisors Expect from Paraeducators

1. Have a “good attitude” toward the school and its personnel: to like and respect children and have a desire to work with them.
2. Be dependable in promptness and attendance, reliable in job performance and discreet in confidential matters.
3. Be able to assist in the instructional process, and to share perceptions of student’s progress and needs.
4. Be able to perform non-instructional duties such as record keeping, classroom maintenance, preparation of bulletin boards and learning materials.
5. Be able to give help and assistance without being asked.
6. To use good judgment when unusual situations arise.
7. Be a liaison between school and community; interpret community values and concerns to the school and those of the school to the community.
8. Participate in training to develop skills and become a more effective paraeducator.
9. Believe that the paraeducator and teacher should be a working team.

Discussion Activity: Can you add to this list?

What Paraeducators Expect from Supervisors

1. To accept the value of paraeducators in education for providing instructional assistance as well as community input.
2. Be sensitive to the feelings and needs of children.
3. Provide educational leadership; include me in the planning, give me meaningful assignments and clear directions.
4. Explain the rules for student behavior and provide support when I am working with students.
5. Give me honest feedback and evaluation of my performance in a confidential manner; praise me for what I do well and offer suggestions for improvement.
6. Respect my individuality; recognize and utilize my talents in classroom activities.
7. Accept me as a member of the school staff, both professionally and socially.
8. Inform me of training opportunities and encourage me to participate.
9. Believe that the paraeducator and teacher should be a working team.

Discussion Activity: Can you add to this list?

Adapted from a paraeducator handbook, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Helping or Hovering?

Effects of Instructional Assistant Proximity on Students with Disabilities

June 1997, Giangreco, Michael F., Edelman, Susan, Luiselli, and T E, MacFarland

Abstract: This study presents data on the effects of the proximity of instructional assistants on students with multiple disabilities who are placed in general education classrooms. Based on extensive observations and interviews, analyses of the data highlighted eight major findings of educational significance, all related to proximity of instructional assistants. Categories of findings and discussion include (a) interference with ownership and responsibility by general educators, (b) separation from classmates, (c) dependence on adults, (d) impact on peer interactions, (e) limitations on receiving competent instruction, (f) loss of personal control, (g) loss of gender identity, and (h) interference with instruction of other students. The article concludes with implications for practice related to policy development, training, classroom practices, and research.

Study Conclusions and Implications for Practice:

The findings of this study demonstrate that there are a number of areas of concern regarding the roles of instructional assistants who support the education of students with disabilities in general education settings. The following is a list of considerations for future policy development, school-based practices, training, and research.

- School districts need to rethink their policies on hiring instructional assistants for individual students. They suggest that alternatives be explored that include hiring assistants for the classroom rather than an individual student. This would allow general and special education teachers to distribute instructional assistants' time and job responsibilities more equitably to benefit a variety of students, both with and without disabilities.
- School staff and families need to reach agreement on when students need the close proximity of an adult, when that proximity can be appropriately provided through natural supports such as classmates, and when to appropriately withdraw supports that require close proximity.
- School staff and community members (e.g., classroom teachers, special educators, parents) need awareness training on the effects and potential harm to children caused by excessive adult proximity, such as described in this study (e.g., loss of personal control, loss of gender identity, interference with peer interactions, dependence on adults).
- School teams need to explicitly clarify the role of the classroom teacher as the instructional leader in the classroom including their roles and responsibilities as the teacher for their students with disabilities. It is the classroom teacher's role to direct the activities of instructional assistants in their charge.
- School staff (e.g., classroom teachers, instructional assistants) should be afforded training in basic instructional procedures that facilitate learning by students with special educational needs in the context of typical classroom activities. Additionally, training should specifically include approaches related to decreasing dependence and fading prompts often associated with excessive and prolonged proximity of adults.
- Students with disabilities need to be physically, programmatically, and interactionally included in classroom activities that have been planned by a qualified teacher in conjunction with support staff as needed (e.g., special educators, related services providers). Such changes in practice should decrease problems associated with students with disabilities being isolated within the classroom.
- The teacher should provide instructional assistants with competency-based training that includes ongoing, classroom-based supervision.
- Instructional assistants should have opportunities for input into instructional planning based on their knowledge of the student, but the ultimate accountability for planning, implementing, monitoring, and adjusting instruction should rest with the professional staff, just as it does for all other students without disabilities.
- Use of instructional assistants in general education classrooms must increasingly be done in ways that consider the unique educational needs of all students in the class, rather than just those with disabilities.
- Research on the aforementioned items should be ongoing in order to explore efficacious ways of supporting students in our schools.

This study suggests that assigning an instructional assistant to a student with special educational needs in a general education class, though intended to be helpful, and may sometimes result in problems associated with excessive, prolonged adult proximity. In questioning the current use of instructional assistants not be used or that the field revert to historically ineffective ways of educating students with disabilities (e.g., special education classes, special education schools). We are suggesting that our future policy development, training, and research focus on different configurations of service delivery that provide needed supports in general education classrooms, yet avoid the inherent problems associated with our current practices. Undoubtedly, these service provision variations will necessarily need to be individualized and flexible to account for the diverse variations in students, teachers, schools, and communities across our country. We hope that by raising the issues presented in this study, we can extend the national discussion on practices to support students with varying characteristics in general education classrooms and take corresponding actions that will be educationally credible, financially responsible—helping, not hovering!

Giangreco, Michael F., Edelman, Susan, Luiselli, and I E., MacFarland, (1997), *Exceptional Children*, Vol 64, No. 1, pp. 7-18, Council for Exceptional Children

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: What are some of the ethical considerations when a paraeducator works one-to-one with a student?

Effects of Paraprofessional Proximity

Challenge	Example of the challenge	Example of how the challenge can be addressed
Interference with ownership and responsibility by general education teachers	When asked why a classroom teacher did not list the names of the student with disabilities in his grade book, his response is, "Someone else is responsible for that student's assessment. I am responsible for the other 26 students in my class."	The general educator can include the names of all of the students in the classroom grade book. The paraprofessional can solicit the information from the appropriate team members and enter it in the grade book.
Separation from classmates	The paraprofessional sits with the student at the back of the room near the door. The special educator pulls the student out of the classroom for instruction.	The student can sit next to a peer in the middle of the room. The special educator can provide instruction in the classroom during reading time.
Students dependence on adults	The paraprofessional gathers and carries all of the student's materials to every class.	The paraprofessional can teach the student to use a picture schedule list (with materials) for each class. Peers can help the student gather and carry the materials.
Reduced student interaction with peers	The paraprofessional sits with students at lunch.	The paraprofessional can supervise many students in the cafeteria without sitting at the student's table.
Limited instruction from licensed teachers	The paraprofessional designs and implements the majority of the instruction for the student with disabilities.	The team can implement collaborative teaching.
Loss of student's personal control	The paraprofessional makes all of the decisions (e.g., who the student works with, what color marker the student uses, when the student comes and goes in the classroom) for the student.	The student is taught how to make choices, and the adults respond to those choices.
Interference with the instruction of other students	The paraprofessional is providing parallel instruction to the student with disabilities. When she is speaking to the student, classmates focus on her instead of the instruction being provided by the general educator.	The team can adapt the instruction (i.e., content and process) to facilitate the inclusion of the student with disabilities. The team can structure small-group work in which both adults are supervising and the learning outcomes for all students are clear.

Source: Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, and MacFarland (1997).

Ethical Issues: Parents Right to Know: NCLB and IDEA

Family members should be active participants in considering the need for paraeducator services in an IEP. If a student requires the services of a paraeducator to assist with the implementation of the IEP, family members need to contribute to the decision making and planning about how those services will be delivered. The Iowa Department of Education Division of Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, (1998), suggests the following questions be asked:

1. What issues do family members and other IEP team members need to address when considering the needs of the student?
2. What accommodations or modifications are needed and who will provide those accommodations?
3. What services will be provided by the paraeducator?
4. Where will the services be provided?
5. How much time will the paraeducator be working with the learner?
6. How long will services be needed?
7. How will we know when the learner outcomes/objectives have been achieved?
8. Who is responsible for directing and monitoring the paraeducator?
9. Who should I call about programming issues such as my child's progress, class scheduling, instructional needs, or social interaction with peers?
10. What skills does the paraeducator need to work effectively with my child? How will the paraeducator be trained prior to starting services? What ongoing staff development will be provided to the paraeducator?
11. How will information the paraeducator has about my child's experiences at school be shared with me?

From: Heller, B., Gerlach, K., (2003), Paraeducators in Educational Settings: Ethical Issues, and in Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings: A Team Approach, 2nd Edition, Pickett and Gerlach, 2003, Pro*ed, Austin, TX.

**PRINCIPALS KNOW
EVERYTHING ABOUT
SOMETHING**

**TEACHERS KNOW
SOMETHING ABOUT
EVERYTHING**

**BUT PARAEDUCATORS ARE
EXPECTED TO KNOW
EVERYTHING ABOUT
EVERYTHING WITH VERY
LITTLE TRAINING.**

**JUST WHO ARE THESE
REMARKABLE PEOPLE?**

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Orientation

1. What do you think a paraeducator needs to know when they begin their job? --(before they begin assisting with instruction)
2. Develop a checklist of the things the principal needs to discuss with a new paraeducator.
3. Develop a checklist of the things the teacher needs to discuss with a new paraeducator
4. What are some questions a paraeducator may need to ask a principal or school administrator?
5. What are some questions a paraeducator may need to ask the teacher who supervises them?
6. What do you feel are the school districts responsibilities regarding paraeducator orientation?
7. Prioritize training (staff development) needs of paraeducators in your district.

Training and Preparation

Studies have found that paraeducators who report receiving more inservice training or preservice preparation report feeling better prepared to fulfill their job responsibilities.

Numerous recent studies and opinion pieces indicate that there is a scarcity of relevant training available to paraeducators.

Perception regarding need for training differ among administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals.

Topics listed in the literature for paraeducator training –

- Roles, responsibilities, and ethical issues
- Positive behavioral supports
- Specifics about disabilities
- Teaching strategies
- Communication and problem solving strategies
- Transition related information and job coaching
- Early childhood special education and child development
- Special Education Law, confidentiality
- Use of computers and accommodations
- Inclusion
- Health and safety
- Development of independence and mobility
- Observation and data collection strategies

Alignment

- Policies
- Roles and responsibilities
- Knowledge and skill competencies
- Systems of preparation and ongoing training
- Assessment strategies
- Highly qualified issues under NCLB and IDEA

Sample Meeting Topics for the Beginning of the School Year

Time:

When will the paraeducator assist the teacher with instruction?
Where will the paraeducator deliver the instruction?
What is the time frame for the lesson/activity?

Roles:

What students will the paraeducator work with?
What will be the format of the teacher-designed lesson plans?
Who will prepare materials?
What is the role of the teacher?
What is the role of the paraeducator?

Management:

When will the paraeducator and teacher plan together?
How will training in the instructional approach be provided?
How and when will feedback be provided?
What other responsibilities will the paraeducator have and is there time to complete them?

Curriculum and Instruction:

How is the lesson to be taught?
What is the instructional style?
What skills and knowledge are necessary to teach it that way?
What is the behavior management strategy to be followed?
What is to be used to provide reinforcement and feedback to the students?
What curriculum materials are to be used?
What data will be collected on student progress and what procedures will be used?

Can you think of other discussion topics?

Key Topics That Need to be Discussed with the Paraeducator at the Beginning of the Year

1. Introductions.
2. Orientation to the school or agency's philosophy of education, rules and regulations.
3. Introduction to the teacher's short and long range plans for the class.
4. Discussion of the teacher's daily and weekly teaching schedules.
5. Discussion of expected lesson plan format.
6. Discussion of procedural matters (discipline, checking pupil's work, turning in lesson plans, planning future conferences, etc.).
7. Discussion of paraeducators role in the teacher's classroom.
8. Clarification of the paraeducators expectations and goals for himself/herself.
9. Discussion of the paraeducators self-concept of strengths and weaknesses pertaining to this and other experiences.
10. Discussion of the kinds of training needed by the paraeducator.
11. Provision for planning a program of early observations, structured support (mentoring), and independent support role activities.
12. Discussion of evaluation criteria that will be used to assess the paraeducators work performance.

Adapted from: Gerlach, K. "Let's Team Up," 2002, NEA Professional Library

Orienting the Paraeducator: Tips for Teachers

1. Provide an initial orientation to the school and to the classroom.
2. Introduce the paraeducator to classroom routines, instructional procedures, and students.
3. Provide opportunities for the paraeducator to observe and participate in various classroom and school activities.
4. Acquaint the paraeducator with pupil personnel records and the manner in which they are kept, used and maintained. The reasons for and need for confidentiality should be emphasized.
5. Acquaint the paraeducator with school procedures, instructional materials, supplies, and equipment.
6. Provide for the evaluation of the paraeducators work through frequent conferences and self-evaluation by the paraeducator.
7. Know what duties you expect the paraeducator to do.
8. At the beginning of the year:
 - Discuss role and responsibilities of both the educators and supervising teacher
 - Discuss behavior management skills or procedures to be used
 - Discuss goals and objectives for each student.
 - Discuss rights of students and parents.
 - Discuss confidentiality.
9. Establish regular meeting times—at least once a week.
 - Discuss weekly lesson plans.
 - Make assignments for the team.
 - Discuss teaching materials that will be needed.
 - Develop a problem-solving strategy.
10. The teaching style of the teacher
11. Ways used to motivate pupil interest and response
12. Teaching strategies, techniques and characteristics
13. Lesson planning (long and short range plans)
14. Pupil progress evaluation
15. Paraeducator evaluation
16. Long range and short range planning
17. Assessment procedures
18. Appropriate dress
19. Classroom structure
20. Rules and standard procedures
21. Parent communication
22. Individualized Education Plans (IEP's)
23. Parent-teacher conferences—role of paraeducator
24. Materials and resources—ordering supplies
25. School/community events—role of paraeducator
26. Records data
27. Schedules
28. Substitutes role
29. Mission/goal of program

Can you think of others?

For the Paraeducator -- Questions to Ask the First Week on the Job

- Kent Gerlach, Ed. D.

1. Is there a required orientation or assessment for this position?
2. Who is my direct supervisor, or who are my supervisors?
3. If I will be working with more than one teacher, how will my time be divided? Who determines this?
4. When is the scheduled meeting time with my supervisor?
5. What staff development (training opportunities) will be available to me? What additional training will be required of me in the future?
6. Who evaluates me? How often will I be evaluated?
7. How will I receive communication from my supervisors, school administration, and the school district?
8. What are my assigned hours? What schedules am I responsible for following? Can I anticipate my schedule changing in any way?
9. When do the students arrive? When do they leave?
10. What will be my role in instructional duties? What will be my role in non-instructional duties?
11. What records will I be responsible for keeping?
12. What are the districts regulations regarding emergency provisions (fire drills, earthquake drills, etc), reporting suspected child abuse concerns, etc.?
13. What are the districts regulations regarding discipline? What is expected of me in terms of student discipline?
14. Will I be responsible for any lunchroom, playground duties or activities?
15. Where are supplies, equipment, and materials kept? How are they obtained? When will I be trained to use the materials or equipment?
16. What is the line of communication and authority I am expected to follow? In other words, what is the chain of command in the district?
17. To whom should I direct questions regarding district policy?
18. What are the districts policies regarding confidentiality?
19. What student records are available to me?
20. Where is my 'spot'? In other words, where do I put my personal things and where do I keep the materials I will be using?
21. What should be my response when a parent raises a question regarding a child I am working with?
22. Is there anything I am expected to do that wasn't mentioned in the interview or on the job description?
23. Am I expected to go to staff meetings?
24. When the teacher is absent, will my role change in any way? If I am absent, will there be a substitute for me? Who do I call if I am ill and not able to come to work?
25. Are there any affiliations or organizations (example, a union for paraeducators) that I will be expected to join?

Adapted from: Gerlach, K "Let's Team Up," 2009, NEA Professional Library

Paraeducator Orientation Assignment

Each section below is presented as a series of questions. Review each of the questions and circle the numbers of those questions that you feel are appropriate questions for the orientation of paraeducators. Review these circled items with your supervisor to make sure that you have identified all the important ones. Review your school documents and fill in the information in the spaces provided next to those questions that you have circled. Are you able to answer the following?

District and School Structure

1. What are the names of central office administrators?
2. Who is the principal of the school? The office staff? The custodian?
3. As a paraeducator, who evaluates me? How often am I evaluated?
4. How often am I paid? What fringe benefits do I receive?
5. Who do I ask for time off for personal appointments? Who do I call when I'm ill?
6. What is the district policy on discipline? Detention? Calls to parents? Expulsion?
7. Is there an organization union or job affiliation for paraeducators?
8. If I'm absent, is there a substitute for me?

School rules and Regulations

1. Is there a procedure for me to check in and out of school?
2. Exactly what time do I arrive at school? Go home?
3. When do the children arrive? When do they go home?
4. What time are the children's recess and lunch breaks? What is the bell schedule?
5. What are the fire or earthquake drill procedures? What am I to do during a fire or earthquake drill?
6. What are the playground rules for children? What equipment is on the playground and what are the rules for that equipment? What other playground toys, balls, bats, etc. are allowed? Are there special rules for such equipment?
7. What are the school rules for conduct in the library, the halls, the restrooms, and the cafeteria?
8. What is the procedure for using the telephone at school? For me? For the children?
9. Where are the audio-visual materials stored at school? How do I check out materials to use in the classroom?
10. Where are classroom supplies stored? What is the procedure for obtaining supplies for the classroom?
11. Are there special school forms that I will be using? Tardy slips? Materials requisition slips? Library or audio-visual checkout slips? Attendance records?

Discipline

1. How much authority do I have with children in the school that are not assigned to our classroom or program?
2. What do I do if I see children misbehaving and there is no teacher around? In the hall? On the playground? In the library?
3. May I send children out of the room to the office if they misbehave? Into the hallway? To another place?
4. Other discipline questions?

General Questions

1. What do I do if the teacher is absent? How can I assist the substitute teacher? Will my role change in any way with a substitute?
2. How could I be reached at school in an emergency?
3. How am I paid? District funds? Special state or government funds? Special grant? Title funds? Special Education?
4. When do I take a break?
5. Am I expected to go to staff meetings?
6. Am I expected to participate in staff development activities?

Ethics and Confidentiality

The following questions have no right or wrong answers. Answers will differ according to the special circumstances that apply to each situation. These questions are included as examples of situations to consider as a paraeducator

1. May I read information on a child's cumulative folder?
2. May I read a child's IEP?
3. What if a child shares a family event that I know is confidential?
4. What do I do if one of the staff loses control and yells or swears or threatens the children?
6. What do I do if I expect a child is being abused?

Adapted from Shepard, Linder, (1979), Classroom Aide Helper, Volk Publishing, Palo Alto, CA

Can you think of other questions?
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DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Paraeducator Orientation

- A. Develop a plan for a one-day Paraeducator Orientation for your school district or building. (Be sure to use any recommendations, competencies, guidelines, and knowledge and skill statements from your state, school district, or professional organizations.)

- B. Develop a plan for an orientation for new teachers on paraeducator supervision. What would you include?

- C. Develop a core curriculum for future paraeducator trainings? Note sample core competencies and Washington State Core Competencies on next pages.

**The job of a paraeducator is like a box
of chocolates, you never know what
you are going to get.**

--Adapted from Forrest Gump

A Core Curriculum for Paraeducators

The topics contained in the core curriculum presented below are designed to serve as a flexible approach for developing course content for district/school/agency paraeducator preparation programs. While the topics for all three levels of paraeducator positions remain the same, new curriculum content and learning activities must be developed to meet the unique needs of paraeducators employed in more advanced positions. No matter whether formal course work is part of the district/agency paraeducator preparation program or a community college program, there is a powerful need for on-the-job coaching provided by teacher/providers to reinforce and strengthen the skills learned during more structured sessions.

A Core Curriculum for Paraeducators

- I. Strengthening the instructional team
 - a. Distinctions in roles and duties of teachers/providers and paraeducators
 - b. Communication and problem-solving
 - c. Team building strategies
- II. Legal and human rights of learners and families
 - a. IDEA Reauthorization
 - b. NCLB
- III. Human growth and development
- IV. Assisting and Supporting the Learning Process
 - a. Lesson plans
 - b. IEP, etc.
 - c. Documenting learner performance and other assessment activities
 - d. Maintaining learner centered environments
 - e. Behavior management strategies
 - f. Instructional methods for learners with diverse needs
- V. Appreciating diversity
- VI. Working with families
- VII. Communicating with professional staff (teachers, administrators, etc.)
- VIII. Emergency, health, and safety procedures

Washington State Core Competencies for Paraeducators

To work in education and related services programs for children and youth with disabilities, paraeducators will demonstrate:

1. Understanding the value of providing instructional and other direct services to children and youth with disabilities.
2. Understanding the roles and responsibilities of certificated/licensed staff and paraeducators.
3. Knowledge of (a) patterns of human development and milestones typically achieved at different ages, and (b) risk factors that may prohibit or impede typical development.
4. Ability to practice ethical and professional standards of conduct, including the requirements of confidentiality.
5. Ability to communicate with colleagues, follow instructions, and use problem solving and other skills that will enable the paraeducator to work as an effective member of the instructional team.
6. Ability to provide positive behavioral support and management.
7. Knowledge of the legal issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities and their families.
8. Awareness of diversity among the children, youth, families, and colleagues with who they work.
9. Knowledge and application of the elements of effective instruction to assist teaching and learning as developed by the certificated/licensed staff in a variety of settings.
10. Ability to utilize appropriate strategies and techniques to provide instructional support in teaching and learning as developed by the certificated/licensed staff.
11. Ability to motivate and assist children and youth.
12. Knowledge of and ability to follow health, safety, and emergency procedures of the agency where they are employed.
13. Awareness of the ways in which technology can assist teaching and learning.
14. Awareness of personal care and/or health related support.

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: District Handbook for Paraeducators

Your task is to develop an outline for a district handbook for paraeducators and a building or program handbook for paraeducators. What do you feel is important to include in each handbook? How would the handbook differ?

District Handbook

Building Handbook

Classroom or Program Handbook

Paraeducator Substitute Handbook

Title One Handbook

Special Education Handbook

Preparation and Training of Paraeducators

Various agencies and organizations with responsibilities for improving the quality of personnel preparation must work together to develop policies and standards for effective staff development. This must be done to assure the availability of a highly skilled workforce. Unless the following questions are asked and answered, ethical dilemmas regarding preparation and training will continue.

1. Have knowledge and skills required by paraeducators and assistants to work in different positions, programs, and across disciplines been identified and developed?
2. Are there systematic competency-based opportunities for personnel development and career advancement?
 - For paraprofessionals
 - For administrators who manage paraprofessionals
 - For educators and other professionals who supervise paraprofessionals
3. Does the training content provide paraeducators and their supervisors with an understanding of the roles of professionals as team leaders, diagnosticians, program planners and supervisors of paraprofessionals?
4. Have the team leadership and supervisory roles been identified and the knowledge and skill competencies developed to prepare the professionals for these roles?
5. Does the training content demonstrate respect for children and youth with disabilities and their families, as well as for those who come from diverse ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds?
6. Does the training content include information on the ethical, legal and team-based roles of professionals and paraeducators in the delivery of education and related services?
7. Do licensed/certified professionals involved in the training of paraeducators have knowledge of and respect for the distinction in professional and paraeducator roles?
8. Is sufficient time and opportunity provided for orientation, initial training, and continued competency development?
9. How can different constituencies (e.g., professional associations, provider agencies, IHEs) contribute to the appropriate efforts to improve the quality of teacher/provider-paraeducator staff development?

From: Heller, B., Gerlach, K. (2003), Paraeducators in Education settings: Ethical Issues, in Pickett, A. L. & Gerlach, K., Paraeducators in Education Settings a Team Approach, Austin, TX: Pro-Ed

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: Case Studies

Case Study One

Paraeducator - Julie

I am Julie and I have been working as a paraeducator in special education for the past 3 months. I completed high school and was married soon after I graduated. My two children are now in high school and I decided to accept this job to supplement our income so that they can go to college. I really like working with children and have been active in elementary PTA, was a Girl Scout leader, and taught in our local Sunday school. In fact, there was a boy in my class who had a developmental disability and I liked the challenge of finding ways to make him feel as though he was part of the group.

When I took this job, I was briefed on district policy with regard to salary, fringe benefits, working hours, vacation, and so on. In addition, I was told about the chain of command in the schools and the supervisor very briefly described my role and responsibilities as a paraeducator. I was told that Mr. White would be the classroom teacher I would be working with and that I would meet him when I reported to work. The supervisor said Mr. White would give me information about the specific tasks I would be expected to perform and the methods and strategies he would expect me to use to carry out the activities.

From the day I walked into the classroom, we have never had a formal discussion about what he expects me to do: there is always some reason why we can't sit down and talk. We can never meet during his prep periods because he is always too busy doing lesson plans to talk to me. When I suggested we meet after school, he told me that would be impossible because he either has graduate classes or meetings to attend. Then on one of the days when he was "free," I really had to get home to take one of my kids to the doctor.

I never know in advance what he wants me to do or how he wants it to be done. Just before he does something in the class, he will say, "Julie, take this group and follow my plans." I have no real idea about what to do, except to try to do what I see him doing while I sit in the back of the room watching him teach the lessons as he has asked me to do. When I am teaching, he frequently breaks into what I am doing and corrects me right in front of the students. I don't have the guts to tell him how this makes me feel—so I save it up until I get home, and my family bears the brunt of all my frustrations.

But what really has me worried is what his correcting me in front of the students might be doing to my ability to work with them. Today it came to a head when he had to leave the room and I was left alone with the group. I asked one of the students who is rather difficult to work with to join us for an activity. He responded by looking straight at me and saying, "No, I don't want to, and I don't have to because you're just the 'para,' and you can't tell me what to do." I wanted to cry and quit right then—but I didn't. Where do I go from here?

Case Study One

Teacher - Ken

I am Ken a high school teacher who has been assigned my first paraeducator after teaching for 12 years. This was done because several special education students were assigned to my class as part of the district's efforts to place them in what the district calls the "least restrictive" environment. I wish they had asked me whether I wanted someone or not because I am really a loner and have very strict rules about how things are to be done in my classroom. I've never worked with anyone before in my classroom and I'm not really sure that I think it is worth the time to plan for another adult, especially someone who is not trained to be a teacher much less to work with students with special needs.

At any rate, Julie walked into my room three months ago, just before school began, and said she was the paraeducator assigned to me. I asked her if she had been told what her duties were and she informed me that they had been explained to her at a meeting at the district office. I wish they had told me what I could expect her to do because I have no idea what goes on in those "briefing" sessions nor have I seen a copy of a job description for paraeducator. I asked her to sit in the back of the room and watch for a while so she could get the hang of how I work. I told her that we'd get together later when I had some free time to talk to her.

During the first few days, I never had time to talk to her. I had lesson plans to develop. I have four different preparations that really take a lot of time. I'm also taking a second master's and I have to leave three days a week almost immediately after school, so for me, just sitting down to talk is a problem. I wish there was time during the day to do this, but I'm just too busy with the kids and the planning to talk to her.

I finally decided that I'd let her review some of the skills I had already taught the students. So I gave her my plans and told her to follow them religiously. But she never did it exactly the way I wanted it to be done—she apparently thought it didn't make much difference how she did it as long as she felt comfortable, so what was I to do? I told her to do it the way I had written it and not to use her own methods.

Three months have gone by and I'm still as harried as I was before if not more so. And to make matters worse, she seems to be having problems controlling the kids in the classroom. It started when I had to leave for an emergency meeting and Julie was left in charge. I'm not sure what she did wrong but she is having real trouble dealing with one of the kids and it seems to have an impact on the way some of the other students are responding to her. Maybe I should find the time to talk to her about how she deals with the problems of integrating the paraeducator into the program.

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A Problem Solving Activity -- Case Study One

1. Describe the problem from the paraeducators point of view. (This may include attitudes, actions, and other factors described in the case study.)
2. Describe the problem from the teacher's point of view.
3. What behavior(s) does the teacher need to change?
4. What behavior(s) does the paraeducator need to change?
5. Discuss and list desired goal(s) for the team
6. How can they work together to achieve the goal and to be a better instructional team? What additional information, skills, or other resources will they need to achieve the goal?

Case Study Two

Paraeducator - Sara

I am Sara and I have been a paraeducator for almost twenty-five years. I started working in an elementary school and did lunchroom duty, monitored the playground, and helped the teacher in the classroom. About 15 years ago the principal asked me how I would feel about working in a new special education program. I've worked in several special education classes—everything from programs for kids with severe and multiple disabilities to resource rooms. I've seen teachers come and I've seen them go. But I'm still around because I love working with special education children and have made a lot of good friends in the building. Over the years I've had a chance to learn about what works and what doesn't work.

I've worked with some really terrific teachers and some that were not so good. In some cases, I was always the one who had to do all of the dirty work or the jobs that bored them—even though my title is Instructional Assistant and I'm supposed to work directly with the students. Other teachers thought they were being “good” to me by treating me as an equal with exactly the same responsibilities as theirs—even though I'm paid a whole lot less than they are. The folks that really drove me crazy were the ones “who had all the answers” and expected me to follow their rules to the “T”. Despite these problems, if they were willing to take time to get to know me and discuss their expectations, we were usually able to work out our differences and get along well.

This year I've been assigned to work with a new teacher fresh out of college with no experience and a lot of new theories and bright ideas. On the first day of school we had a conference and she outlined what she wanted me to do. Basically, as I see it, she expects me to return to the status that I had when I first started twenty years ago. I am supposed to escort the children to the lunchroom, the playground, speech therapy, etc., keep the attendance records, do the toileting, keep the room neat, and generally stay out of her way. She does let me play records and tell stories during the rest period.

Now she has developed a “new” program plan for James and all of a sudden has asked me to help implement it. I don't think it's going to work because Mrs. Adams tried something similar last year and we had to change it several times. By the way, Mrs. Adams was one of the best teachers I've ever worked with. She had a great sense of humor, always included me in on the fun things, changed diapers herself once in a while because she believed that toilet training was part of the instructional process, asked me what I thought about her ideas and what was going on in the class and when I talked, she listened.

I'd like to talk to Ms. Brown about James—but I've got a couple of problems. She hasn't asked me about what I think and she really seems more interested in trying out her theories than she is in hearing from me. In fact, if I had to describe her I'd say she is very dictatorial. Besides, the older I get the nicer it is to just do my job and go home rather than taking orders from someone who doesn't know half as much as I do about teaching special education kids. On the other hand—with a few minor changes the goals and activities she has planned for James would probably work—maybe.

Case Study Two

Teacher-Anne

My name is Anne and this is my first teaching job. My undergraduate degree is in Special Education and I have a Master's as well. I have had some teaching experience, but only as a student teacher. I've really been looking forward to being in charge of my own classroom, and putting the techniques I've worked so hard to learn to work. There was one thing, however, that no one prepared me for when I was in college—that is that I would be expected to supervise someone old enough to be my mother who also has more than 25 years experience. But I do think I'm lucky to have an aide to help out with all of the little things that have to be done in the classroom so I can spend a lot of individual time with the students.

I really feel that as the teacher, I am the person who is responsible for what goes on in the classroom and that I will be held accountable for the good and the bad. That is why, after thinking it over, I decided that the best way to use my aide was to have her do the non-instructional chores and clerical duties. Besides, since Sara is so much older than I am and really has a lot of experience, I decided that it was very important to establish myself as the authority figure. This isn't always easy because working with Sara can be a little intimidating. She really gets along well with the other teachers in the building, and they all rave about her and tell me how lucky I am to have her.

There is a child in the class who seems to fit an almost textbook picture of a syndrome that I've read about but have never seen. I'm sure that he will benefit from a new technique that has been developed to cope with such a youngster and his behavior. I have laid out, in great detail, the type of interventions that I want to use and have started to follow the program. I've decided, however, that if it is going to work, Sara is going to have to be involved as well because everything has to be done consistently and systematically.

When I asked her to help implement the program she didn't ask any questions or say anything—she just smiled a Mona Lisa smile. Later that day she started telling me about how terrific Mrs. Adams was and what a terrific teacher she was. She's done this before and I'm getting a little tired of it. In any event, I'm really more concerned about James and meeting his needs. I'd like to talk to Sara about it. But I don't want her to think I don't know what I'm doing and I certainly don't want to diminish my authority in the classroom. What can I do?

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A Problem Solving Activity -- Case Study Two

1. Describe the problem from the paraeducators point of view. (This may include attitudes, actions, and other factors described in the case study.)
2. Describe the problem from the teacher's point of view.
3. What behavior(s) does the teacher need to change?
4. What behavior(s) does the paraeducator need to change?
5. Discuss and list desired goal(s) for the team.
6. How can they work together to achieve the goal and to be a better instructional team? What additional information, skills, or other resources will they need to achieve the goal?

Case Study Three

It is one o'clock in the afternoon and the teacher became ill. The principal sends the teacher home and asks the paraeducator to be in charge of the class for the rest of the afternoon. The paraeducator was told to teach the lessons to the entire class as scheduled in the lesson plan book.

- a) How do you feel about this situation?
 - b) Discuss this case from the perspective of the administrator, teacher and paraeducator.
 - c) What are the professional and ethical implications of this case?
-

Case Study Four

John, a student with special needs, has disrupted the classroom several times this semester. The teacher has just about given up on him. Today, the teacher said to Jane, the paraeducator, "Take him, keep him busy. I want to work with students who really want to learn. I'm assigning you to work just with him."

- a) How do you feel about paraeducators working with the most challenging students?
 - b) What should have been done differently?
 - c) What are the professional and ethical implications of this case?
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Case Study Five

Karen Adams has been assigned to David Bowen's classroom. On the first day of school, Mr. Bowen introduces himself and the paraeducator by saying, "I am Mr. Bowen, your teacher, and this is Karen. Karen is a helping teacher for Tommy, Susan, and Mark."

- a) How do you feel about Mr. Bowen introducing Karen by her first name?
- b) Discuss the potential problems that could result by assigning the paraeducator to work with a child rather than a class or program.
- c) How could this be handled differently?
- d) What are the professional and ethical implications of this case?

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ACTIVITY: Workshop Post Test

1. Define paraeducator.
2. What are the benefits in utilizing paraeducators within education programs? For students? For teachers?
3. Explain why supervision of paraeducators is essential and required under federal guidelines.
4. What are the teacher's responsibilities to planning for the paraeducator?
5. What should be included in a paraeducator's job description?
6. What should be included in the orientation provided to a paraeducator?
7. Why is a team approach important?
8. Explain the importance of setting aside a regular conference time for the teacher and paraeducator. What are appropriate topics for the conference?
9. What are the Federal regulations regarding paraeducator training and supervision?
10. In preparing the paraeducator to assist in and supporting instruction, what steps should the teacher take?

Defining the Terms

PARAEDUCATORS are school/agency employees 1) whose positions are either instructional in nature or who provide other direct services to children and youth and/or their families; and 2) who work under the supervision of teachers or other professional practitioners who are responsible for a) the design, implementation, and assessment of learner progress, and b) the evaluation of the effectiveness of learning programs and related services for children and youth and/or their families (Pickett, 1989). Other titles used to identify these employees may include: paraprofessional, teacher aide/assistant, education technician, transition trainer, job coach, therapy assistant, home visitor, and many others

GUIDING PRINCIPLES are statements of beliefs that provide a philosophical framework on which SEAs, LEAs, and other agencies can build to ensure appropriate team roles, supervision, and professional development and respect for paraeducators.

STANDARDS are statements that describe job functions/tasks that are related to competency areas established for an occupation. The standards include performance indicators and the skills and knowledge required to carry out tasks.

COMPETENCIES are specific skills and knowledge required for employment in various programs and position levels.

PROGRAM PLANNING TEAMS are responsible for developing individualized education plans (IEPs), individualized transition plans (ITPs), and individualized family service plans (IFSPs) for learners. Membership includes representatives from education and related service disciplines that are required to identify learner goals and plans to meet the needs of children and youth with disabilities or other special needs. Team members may be general and special education teachers, early childhood educators, families, occupational and physical therapists (OTs/PTs), speech language pathologists (SLPs), psychologists, social workers, administrators, physicians, nurses, transition specialists, paraeducators, and more. Team leadership may rotate or be assumed by a person representing the discipline with the primary responsibility for achieving the goals and objectives of the individual learner.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS are much smaller and have day-to-day responsibility for providing education and other direct services to children/youth and their families. Program implementation teams are found in inclusive general and special education classrooms, Title I, multilingual/ESL, early childhood, and school-to-work/vocational preparation programs. A teacher, early childhood educator, transition specialist, or another provider who has the primary responsibility for developing, implementing and evaluating learning activities usually assumes team leadership. Typically, program implementation team members include but are not limited to early childhood or transition specialists, teachers, and paraeducators. Other staff that support learning activities or provide related services might include OTs, PTs, SLPs, and nurses; however, these personnel rarely serve as leaders of program implementation teams.

PARAEDUCATOR MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION. Responsibility for the management and supervision of paraeducators is divided into two components. The first is the roles and responsibilities of district level administrators, building principals, and agency/program directors. The second component is the supervisor roles and responsibilities of teachers/providers.

1. **Administrative personnel** in LEAs and other education provider agencies have operational responsibility for establishing and carrying out personnel practices connected with paraeducators employment, preparation, evaluation, and dismissal. This includes 1) developing paraeducators job descriptions and performance criteria, 2) determining placement, 3) assessing overall performance, 4) providing standardized, systematic opportunities for paraeducators professional development, and 5) ensuring that teachers/providers are aware of and prepared for their roles as supervisors of paraeducators.
2. **Teachers/providers** have responsibility for supervising and integrating paraeducators into learning environments. This includes 1) planning the tasks that paraeducators will carry out, 2) developing daily/weekly schedules for paraeducators, 3) appropriately delegating responsibilities to paraeducators, 4) monitoring the day-to-day performance of paraeducators, 5) providing feedback and on-the-job training to paraeducators, and 6) sharing relevant information about paraeducators strengths and training needs with principals or agency directors.

SCOPES OF RESPONSIBILITY AND SKILL STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS/PROVIDERS AND PARAEDUCATORS. The scope of teacher/provider responsibilities targets their roles connected with the supervision and integration of paraeducators into program implementation teams. Neither the teacher/provider scope of responsibilities nor their skill standards are designed to include all duties and functions performed by teachers/providers in the planning, delivery, and assessment of learning programs and other services. The paraeducators scope of responsibilities and the skill standards are designed for team members who work alongside teachers/providers in various programs and settings and assist them with achieving learning goals for children and youth. We have developed scopes of responsibilities for paraeducators working in three position levels, as well as skill and knowledge standards for each of the three levels.

Quotes

A supervisor of paraprofessionals is defined as one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way. They map the way by setting team goals and clarifying roles. – Kent Gerlach

Today society asks more of educators than ever before. You are required to be social workers, computer experts, juvenile officers, mediators, researchers, business partners, interdisciplinary team members, and chemical dependency counselors.

You must provide for children who don't speak English; who are gifted learners, visual learners, kinesthetic learners, voracious learners, and reluctant learners; who are emotionally disturbed, hungry, and homeless. We ask you to teach children how to drive, get along with others, balance a checkbook, make healthy choices, use new technologies—and, yes, how to read, write, and do arithmetic. – Author Unknown

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires. – William Arthur Ward, Author
As adults, when we think back to our years in school, we remember teachers, not instructional methods and techniques. We remember the teachers who saw something special in us and made a connection, planting those cherished memories and good feelings that continue to live within us wherever we are or whatever we've become. – John Blaydes, Motivational Speaker, Author

Schools are like a jigsaw puzzle. Each edge piece of a puzzle interlocks with two others to form the puzzle's framework and give structure and support to the puzzle as a whole. Each piece has a unique design and cut that ensures just the right place to fit within the puzzle. Each morning, staff members form the edge pieces that interlock to create a safe environment and give support to one another and the whole. Each morning, they provide just the "right place" for every student to fit safely and securely. The staff members are strength and stability, and like the edge pieces, they do not stand alone in this responsibility. There are always others to support and assist, ensuring that every student has a place. – Karen Hegeman, Author

If you want to be successful, it's just this simple: Know what you're doing. Love what you're doing. And believe in what you're doing. – O. A. Battista, Author

Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know. – Daniel Boorstin, Author, Historian

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Paraeducator Resources And Websites

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Resources

- National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals (NRCP): www.nrcpara.org
- No Child Left Behind: www.ed.gov/nclb/
- Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (SPeNSE): www.spense.org/results.html
- Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium: ici2.umn.edu/para
- Paraprofessionals in the Education Workforce, National Education Association (NEA): www.nea.org/esp/resource/parawork.htm
- Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education (COPSSE): www.coe.ufl.edu/copsse
- Paraeducator Support of Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms, University of Vermont: www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/
- Roles of Educational Paraprofessionals in Effective Schools, U.S. Department of Education: www.ed.gov/pubs/paraprofessionals/
- National Clearinghouse for Careers in Special Education, CEC: www.special-ed-careers.org/research_library/paraeducators.html
- Standards for a Professional, American Federation of Teachers (AFT): www.aft.org/psrp/standards/
- Schools and Staffing Survey, National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES): www.nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/
- Paraeducator-to-Teacher Programs, National Teacher Recruitment Clearinghouse: www.recruitingteachers.org/become/paraprograms.html
- IDEA Practices Home Page: www.ideapractices.org/
- National Clearinghouse for Paraeducators Resources, Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research: www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/clearinghouse.html
- Paraeducator Resources Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory: www.nwrac.org/links/paraed.html
- State Level Initiatives Related to Training and Supervision of Paraeducators, Project FORUM National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 320, Alexandria, VA 22314, Telephone 703.519.3800, ext. 333, Fax 703.519.3808. Please contact Joy Markowitz at joy@nasdse.org or by calling 703.519.3800, ext. 335.
- Additional copies of the IDEA Partnerships PARAPROFESSIONAL INITIATIVE: Report to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (SEP) may be obtained from: Council for Exceptional Children, 1110 North Glebe Rd, Ste 300, Arlington, VA 22201-5704, Voicemail 877.232.4332 (toll free), TTY 866.915.5000, Fax 703.264.1637, Email idaopractices@ideapractices.org
- IMPACT: Feature Issue on Paraeducators Supporting Students with Disabilities and At Risk. Published by the Institute on Community Integration (UCEDD) and the Research and Training Center on Community Living, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota * Volume 15 * Number 2 * Fall 2002. <http://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/152/default.html>

Websites

- **Legislation and Paraeducators** – Focuses on current legislation affecting paraeducators www.specialednews.com/story%20archive/0500/parastates0519.html
- **Council for Exceptional Children Career Profile for Paraeducators** – Describes the nature of work, education required, resource information, and more. www.cec.sped.org/cl/career_choices/profiles/professionals/para_edu.html

- ***Paraeducator Issues*** – Contains information on competencies and performance indicators for paraeducators, mentoring programs, and sample record-keeping forms. www.wa.nea.org/prf_dv/para_ed/para.html
- ***Council for Exceptional Children Standards for Beginning Paraeducators*** – Contains information on CEC's knowledge and skill standards for beginning paraeducators of students with exceptionalities. www.cec.sped.org/ps/parastds.html
- ***National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities*** – Discusses ethical responsibilities, educational requirements, roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals, plus responsibilities of qualified teacher/service providers. www.ldonline.org/nicld/paraprof298.html
- ***The Growing Roles of Paraeducators*** – Designed to show the changing role of paraeducators amid teacher shortages. www.specialednews.com/story%20archive/0500/paraeds0519.html
- ***National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals*** – An annotated bibliography highlighting paraeducator training resources, administrative guidelines, and personnel preparation models. www.nrcpara.org/bibliography/index.html
- ***Technology, Research, and Innovation in Special Education*** – Provides information on training programs for paraprofessionals and supervising teachers, and includes links to dozens of other sites. www.trisped.org
- ***Project Para*** – Offers training that is comprehensive, easily accessible, and beneficial to both paraeducators and the teachers who supervise them. www.para.unl.edu

Organizations

American Physical Therapy Association
1111 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
1-800-999-2782
www.apta.org

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852
1-800-638-8255
www.asha.org

National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education
Council for Exceptional Children
1110 North Glebe Road, Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201
1-800-641-7824
ncps@cec.sped.org

National Education Association
1201 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-833-4000
www.nea.org

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services
Utah State University
Logan, Utah 84322-6526
435-797-7272
www.nrcpara.org

Occupational Therapy Association
4720 Montgomery Lane
PO Box 31220
Bethesda, Maryland 20824-1220
301-652-2682
www.aota.org

Paraeducator Resources and Websites

American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Standards for a Profession www.aft.org/psrp Brochure on paraprofessional and teacher collaboration www.aft.org/psrp/classroomteam/team.html Report on status of state efforts to assist paraprofessionals in meeting NCLB requirements www.aft.org/psrp/certification/midtermreport/index.html.

AskEric Home Page This website provides access to the ERIC database and other information about the Educational Resources Information Center. www.eduref.org

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) This website provides information about ASCD's professional development activities, and affiliates and networks. www.ascd.org

B.E.S.T. Education Search by Topic Search by keyword or by the Topic List, or browse the Awards for extensive reviews on current education sites. www.education-world.com

Career Development for Non-Traditional Community College Students as Special Education Paraprofessionals. www.schoolhousedoor.com/media/teacher/pickett-careerdevt.txt

The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (CCSRI) CCSRI houses a variety of tools, guides, and links relating to school improvement <http://www.centerforcsri.org>

Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education (COPSSE) paraprofessional issue brief www.coe.ufl.edu/copsse

Council for Exceptional Children information on CEC's knowledge and skill standards for beginning paraeducators in special education. www.cec.sped.org/ps/parastds.html

Council of Great City Schools This website contains links and resources selected by this coalition of school districts in the 66 largest U.S. cities. www.cfcs.org

The Education Alliance This Brown University organization offers research-based solutions for school reform. The Education Alliance addresses the needs of diverse student populations in the public schools by offering a variety of educational resources. <http://www.alliance.brown.edu/>

The Education Trust Ed Trust is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to make schools and colleges work for all of the young people they serve. This organization provides credible information about what works in high performing, high poverty schools. www.edtrust.org

ERIC Database of publications pertaining to Paraprofessionals, US Department of Education. <http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/ERIC/resumes/basicsummary.cfm>

Guide for Effective Paraeducator Practices in Iowa. This Guide describes the services that are necessary to support effective paraeducator services in Iowa schools. <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/asis/ibp/para/index.html>

IDEA Practices Home Page www.ideapractices.org

IMPACT: Explores the growing role of paraeducators in our schools. www.ici.umn.edu/products/newsletters.html

Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium www.ici2.umn.edu/para

National Clearinghouse for Paraeducators www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/Clearinghouse.html

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) NCPIE is a coalition of major education, community, public service, and advocacy organizations working to create meaningful family-school partnerships in every school in America. This website offers up-to-date information about policies and practices that affect education, and practical ways that parents can become effective partners with schools in improving their children's education. <http://www.ncpie.org>

National Education Association – Education Support Professionals <http://www.nea.org/esphome/esp>

National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. Discusses ethical responsibilities, educational requirements, roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals, plus responsibilities of qualified teacher/service providers. www.ldonline.org/njclld/paraprof298.html

National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals. Addresses paraeducator policy questions and other needs of the field, provides technical assistance. www.nrcpara.org

No Child Left Behind The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind). www.ed.gov/nclb/

No State Left Behind: The Challenges and Opportunities of ESEA 2001
www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/32/37/3237.doc

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www.nwrel.org/planning/reports/paraeducator.pdf “Working Together for Successful Paraeducator Services: A Guide for Paraeducators, Teachers, and Principals.”
www.nwrel.org/request/may2002/index.html

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Paraeducator Career Profile http://www.special-ed-careers.com/career_choices/profiles/professions/para_edu.html

Paraeducator Support: Additional Resources www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/parasupport/addit/18add.html

PARA2 Center University of Colorado in Denver <http://www.paracenter.org>

Paraeducator Support of Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms, University of Vermont. www.uvm.edu/~cdci/parasupport/

Paraprofessional Academy <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/case/paracad/index.htm>

Paraprofessional Database Research Navigator. The Education Commission of the States has compiled a large amount of research from each of the 50 states regarding paraprofessional certification and qualification requirements, professional development for paraprofessionals and assessment tests and passing scores for those tests, which are accepted and designated by states.
<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/63/52/6352.pdf>

Professional Development for Paraprofessionals across the States describes what states are doing regarding competency for paraprofessional requirements. Professional development has come to the forefront of the paraprofessional occupation with new requirements and timelines for “highly qualified” status under NCLB. <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/63/53/6353.pdf>

Project Para – University of Nebraska Lincoln Online training www.para.unl.edu

National Teacher Recruitment Clearinghouse

<http://www.recruitingteachers.org/channels/clearinghouse>

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. <http://www.recruitingteachers.org> (Information on paraprofessional to teacher programs.)

Resource website for paraeducator supervision www.ici2.umn.edu/para/teachers

Rhode Island Teacher Assistants Project Focuses on policy, skill standards and training for teacher assistants <http://www.ritap.org/ta/>

Special Education News Focuses on special education and current legislation affecting paraeducators. www.specialednews.com

Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (SPeNSE) Fact Sheets www.spense.org/results.html

Technology, Research, and Innovation in Special Education

Provides information on training programs for paraprofessionals and supervising teachers and includes links to dozens of other sites. www.trisped.org

Utah State Paraeducator Website, Utah standards and knowledge and skills competencies for paraeducators, and portfolio development www.utahpara.org

Walla Walla Community College, Washington State, paraeducator skill standards
www.sbctc.ctc.edu/transfer/teacherprep.asp

Washington State Guidelines and Competencies for Paraeducators www.paraeducator.com

WestEd WestEd provides valuable information on improving learning from infancy to adulthood, both while in and out of school. This website also contains numerous sources of research-based products and resources. <http://www.wested.org/cs/we/print/docs/we/home.htm>

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Dr. Kent Gerlach is a Professor in the Department of Instructional Development and Leadership at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington. Kent has presented staff development workshops for teachers, administrators, and paraeducators throughout the United States and Canada. He has served as a keynote presenter at many professional conferences and meetings, and has presented workshops on teaming, collaboration, and effective school research for numerous local and state educational agencies. In addition, he has been recognized nationally for his contributions, research, and publications on paraeducator issues including their supervision, employment, and training. Kent co-authored the texts "Supervising Paraeducators in Educational Settings: A Team Approach," and "Paraeducators in School Settings," both published by Pro-ed Publishers. Kent is also the author of "Let's Team Up: A Checklist for Paraeducators, Teachers and Principals," published by the National Education Association and the Council for Exceptional Children. In addition, he has authored several journal articles, book chapters, and staff development materials dealing with collaboration and team building, and the legal and ethical issues affecting the roles of paraeducators and their supervisors. Kent is the recipient of several teaching awards, including the PLU Faculty Achievement Award and PLU Teaching Excellence Award. Recently Kent resided in Washington, DC where he served as a consultant to several organizations including Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), National Education Association (NEA), the IDEA Partnerships, and the U.S. Department of Education. He has held faculty appointments at the University of Washington (Seattle), University of Hawaii, Augustana College (Sioux Falls), and the University of Texas at Austin. Currently he serves on the Editorial Board of the Council for Learning Disabilities, the Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Developmental Disabilities, and the Council for Exceptional Children's Teacher Education Division. He also serves on the Editorial Boards of the Thompson Publishing Group, Title One Monitor, and serves as a consultant to the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for Washington State.

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